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Fifty-first Year

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3641st Meeting

Friday, 15 March 1996, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Legwaila	(Botswana)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Eitel
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Queta
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wisnumurti
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Poland	Mr. Włosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

96-85294 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Jordan, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, Rwanda, Swaziland and Tunisia in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lamamra (Algeria), Mr. Dorani (Djibouti), Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia), Mrs. Camara (Guinea), Mr. Shah (India), Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan), Mr. Owade (Kenya), Mr. Snoussi (Morocco), Mr. Kamal (Pakistan), Mr. Bakuramutsa (Rwanda), Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland) and Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia associate themselves with this statement.

First of all, we wish to commend the President of the Security Council for scheduling this open meeting, which will help keep the international community's attention focused on the situation in Somalia. We hope that the unequivocal message that emerges from today's meeting will travel all the way to Somalia and be heard by the leaders of the country, who bear responsibility for the present situation of confusion and anarchy that has come to characterize Somalia — or rather what is left of it.

The world has become a smaller place thanks to extraordinary technological innovations that have shortened the distance between nations and have increased mutual understanding among peoples. Despite these advances, Somalia seems to have taken the opposite direction, and is slowly regressing towards the political and social underdevelopment that we had hoped was a thing of the past. This corner of Africa is sunk in a seemingly never-ending political struggle whose main ingredients are individual and clan rivalries, banditry and the use of violence. All this occurs while the population is abandoned to its own suffering.

Somalia today is a country without even a semblance of central authority. The Secretary-General, in the introduction of a recent "blue book" entitled *The United Nations and Somalia 1992-1996*, draws attention to the concept of a so-called failed State. A country that has lost its government, he underlines, compromises its place as a member of the international community. The lack of a representative government prevents Somalia from, among other things, benefitting from the funding provided for by the Lomé Convention. It makes it impossible to implement any plan to rehabilitate industry, agriculture and animal husbandry. It also prevents the delivery of humanitarian assistance on a broader scale.

Almost one year ago to the day, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) was terminated. The Operation cost the lives of 137 peace-keepers as well as those of numerous relief workers. Since then the violent deaths of international personnel have continued, leading to a reduction in humanitarian assistance operations to a bare minimum. However, the political situation in the country has not changed. Against the background of continued fighting between the warlords there is a limit to what can be achieved by the international community. We wish here to underline that the United Nations objectives in Somalia were fundamentally undermined by the lack of progress in the peace process and in national reconciliation, and in particular by the lack of sufficient cooperation from the Somali parties. As the Security Council has repeatedly stated in the past, it is the people and the leaders of Somalia who bear the ultimate responsibility for national reconciliation and for restoring peace. The situation seems particularly critical in the capital, where the increase in criminal activity is compounded by the continued closure of the port and the airport, leading to a blockade of commercial activity.

The situation, as we have seen, is hardly reassuring, and security conditions are only getting worse. There are

signs of a possible extension of the activities of armed bands and of a wide-scale renewal of fighting. In this context, there is great risk of a progressive worsening of the food and health situation. Already we are receiving reports of malnutrition, especially among children, and of a potentially dangerous outbreak of cholera.

The European Union is deeply concerned by the spiral of seemingly endless violence gripping Somalia. While we fully support the appeal issued in January by the Security Council to the Somali leaders to resume peaceful negotiations, we reiterate the line of strict neutrality towards the various Somali factions. The European Union believes that Somalia will not be able to take its proper place in the international community until a government emerges that is truly representative of all the Somali components.

The European Union supports the continuation of the Secretary-General's small political office for Somalia in Nairobi. It is right that the United Nations should stand ready, through its good offices, to help the process of national reconciliation should an opening appear. But our greatest concern is the humanitarian situation of the people, which far from the television cameras has ceased to be "newsworthy". It is our responsibility to keep the international community's focus on the country, to prevent Somalia from disappearing not only from the international scene, but also from our agenda, and becoming a true no man's land.

In this spirit we reiterate our conviction that the efforts of the United Nations and of the international agencies to assist the civilian population must be pursued within the limits allowed by the unstable situation. A recent United Nations mission confirmed the absolute need to maintain such a commitment. For this to continue, however, it should be possible to count on the renewed financial support of the donors. In this respect, we strongly reiterate the appeal already made by the Security Council to the Somali parties and factions to open unconditionally Mogadishu's main seaport and other transportation facilities in order to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The European Union, which is one of the main providers of humanitarian assistance to Somalia, intends to pursue this path. The European Union also supports international and regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity and encourages them to continue their efforts to foster the return of peace and stability in Somalia. As we all know, hope is the last thing to die. Today we express our hope that our appeals for pacification can quickly produce concrete results, and that Somalia can finally return to living in more human and dignified conditions.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on pursuing during your presidency this good idea of convening open Security Council debates. In the light of our experience in the Council's work, we can now say that we find it most enriching to hear the views of non-member delegations on the various items before us. We feel that this is a practice that the Council should be broadening and deepening in an appropriate way.

As this is the first time that Chile has spoken in the Security Council on the situation in Somalia, I shall be taking some time to make my statement.

By reading the latest reports of the Secretary-General, we can appreciate the lack of progress in the Somali situation, which remains confused and frustrating. Nevertheless, the worst — an all-out civil war — has been averted.

I wish to focus in the first part of my statement on an aspect that is critical to a country with a political framework like that of Somalia: the humanitarian situation. Humanitarian problems vary from region to region. In some sectors, the work of humanitarian missions can be carried out with less difficulty than in others.

But generally speaking, extraordinarily complex problems exist. We have been informed that malnutrition is once again emerging in places that had previously shown some promise. The main factor in this situation is the lack of purchasing power and the lack of access to food markets. At the same time, the resurgence of cholera has been a major concern. More than 1,800 cases recorded in February alone may be related to cholera, and it is confirmed to have caused 23 deaths.

It is worth noting that one of the major obstacles preventing due attention to the problems of malnutrition and cholera is not lack of medicine but, rather, the difficulty of transporting food and medicine. As we know, the port of Mogadishu remains closed. The general lack of security in the country does not make overland transport advisable; therefore, air transport, which considerably increases the cost and difficulty of any operation, must be used.

But we have learned that the various United Nations agencies and agencies of other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations continue to cooperate as energetically as they can to mitigate the effects of the problems besetting the Somali population. The difficulties they are facing in this respect are enormous: added to the lack of security in certain parts of the country and transportation costs and difficulties is the shrinkage of funds provided by donors to various humanitarian programmes.

My delegation would like to echo the request addressed to us by the various agencies regarding the urgent need to reopen the port of Mogadishu for humanitarian shipments. If this request were heard by the factions that control the port of Mogadishu, and if they were prepared to reopen it so that the agencies could provide humanitarian assistance to the factions' own children, women and elderly, this would be a sign of hope for the future of Somalia.

It is fitting to pay tribute to all the agencies and assistance programmes in Somalia: those of the United Nations and those of the vast number of non-governmental organizations, which, motivated by their conviction, their passion and their belief in humanitarian causes, are today present in Somalia under extraordinarily difficult conditions.

In the last statement of the President of the Council on this matter, we emphasized the courage and the valour of those who are today working in Somalia under such difficult conditions. However, we also noted something that I wish to recall in this debate. On this occasion, in the statement of 24 January 1996, we said:

> "The Security Council considers the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance to be a crucial factor in the overall security and stability of Somalia." *(S/PRST/1996/4, seventh para.)*

I wish to emphasize this because what we said then means that the humanitarian task is not simply a worthy cause, not just a matter of saving people. In a situation like that of Somalia, it is also an important political task, inasmuch as it makes it possible to maintain a degree of security and stability, that the political conditions of the country itself do not permit. I think it extraordinarily important that the Security Council has recognized that humanitarian duty.

In that same statement, the Council expressed its deep concern at the fact that no tangible progress had been made in national reconciliation in Somalia. The statement urges all political leaders and sectors of Somalia to return to an inclusive process of consultations and negotiation aimed at national reconciliation leading to the establishment of a broad-based national government.

A month and a half may be too short a time to achieve results, but the truth is that we must recall the statement of the President of the Security Council made almost a year ago, on 6 April 1995, when the Council referred to the completion of the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). That statement also appealed to the Somali parties to seek national reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the interests of peace, security and development. The same had been said in earlier resolutions.

The fact is that these appeals by the international community, expressed through the principal political organ of the United Nations, have elicited no response from the leaders of the various Somali factions. There is no doubt as to who is responsible for what is occurring today in Somalia: the leaders of the factions, the political leaders who are incapable of seeing beyond their personal interests and their desire for power and of making them secondary to the interests of the Somali people.

Why can they not understand the international community's exhortation that they find a peaceful way out that will enable Somalia to be reborn?

Why do they not understand the damage they continue to inflict on the population of their own country by impeding the movement of persons, food and medicine between their various spheres of influence?

How can they fail to realize that by continuing with their dogmatic stances, and their eagerness to achieve greater territorial control, they are acting only in their personal and group interests and against the needs of the Somali people?

The basic problem of Somalia is not that is has had a system of clans and sub-clans imposed upon the divisions of the former centralized administration of the country. That system, if properly administered and led, could give a country order and stability. The problem is not that Somalia does not fit the classical political outline that most nations of the world are accustomed to. It is not that there is no central government, a fact to which

we are accustomed, although it is sometimes hard for us to understand that a country like Somalia does not have the same characteristics as others. That is not the problem. With its own pre-colonial historical structures, Somalia could achieve stability. The problem is that the political leaders want neither to return to past forms of stability nor to accept modern formulas, modern ways of working. They seek only power. I believe that we must be exceptionally clear in that respect, because in Somalia, more than in any other country, the international community has been prepared to cooperate and to help the country's leaders themselves take the decisions that fall to them. That is why they are leaders; that is why they have assumed the role of leading their own factions.

Thus, before concluding my statement, I should like to place on record the appreciation of the Government of Chile for all the steps taken by the Secretary-General in connection with the Somali situation. We hope that the Political Office can be transferred from Nairobi to Mogadishu as soon as possible.

These meetings that we are now holding, these open orientation debates, are very useful for enhancing the work of the Council in the future. It would also be in our interest if, at the appropriate time, the Security Council could put what has been expressed in today's debate in the form of a statement, a resolution or some other initiative so that we could keep abreast of events in Somalia and be prepared to help that country return to normalcy and help its people — especially the leaders who are today standing in the way of agreement — regain their peace of mind.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have just received letters from the representatives of Uganda and Zimbabwe in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mukasa-Ssali (Uganda) and Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): My delegation would like to express its satisfaction that the Security Council has convened this open debate on the situation in Somalia to explore the full realm of options that may be taken by the United Nations to encourage the process of national reconciliation and to address that country's tragic situation. We deem this meeting to be of significant importance given the lack of progress in the political situation and declining security and humanitarian conditions. It is our sincere hope, therefore, that our deliberations today will produce effective measures to encourage and facilitate the creation of an environment conducive to a peaceful resolution of this crisis.

The Indonesian delegation remains concerned by the debilitating stalemate in Somalia and the continuing conflict between the various factions. While it is true that an all-out civil war has been averted, the reality of the situation is one dominated by political instability, inter-clan conflict, banditry and general lawlessness. Moreover, we believe that maintenance of the status quo can lead only to widespread hostilities with severe ramifications.

The inability of all the faction leaders to forge comprehensive political initiatives for achieving national reconciliation continues to inflict harsh consequences on the people of Somalia. Furthermore, this continuing unstable climate has had severe repercussions on the efforts of the international community to render critical humanitarian assistance.

We firmly believe that the people of Somalia bear the ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and restoring peace. We therefore consider it a matter of urgency and importance that all Somali factions — particularly their leaders — should use all available means to enter into broad-based consultations, with the widest possible scope of participation, in order to avert a further deterioration in the situation.

We call on all parties to work in earnest towards this end by achieving a genuine compromise that reflects the needs and aspirations of the people of Somalia as a whole rather than their own narrow self-interest. My delegation notes that several recent proposals have been put forward by the Somali Salvation Alliance and the Somali National Alliance to begin the process of reconciliation and dialogue. We wish to stress, however, that their contribution to a comprehensive peace will prove inadequate so long as they choose to pursue independent paths towards peace.

None the less, my delegation also believes that international community's response will have a profound impact on the peace process. In this regard, my delegation maintains that the international community should resist — as was reflected in Security Council resolution 954 (1994) and clearly stated in the Council's presidential statement of 24 January 1996 (S/PRST/1996/4) — the temptation to abandon the crisis in Somalia. We therefore encourage the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue their efforts, in cooperation with the United Nations, in the search for a lasting peace in Somalia.

We believe further that it is necessary for all Member States, in particular the neighbouring countries, to continue to provide support for all Somali efforts towards genuine national reconciliation and to refrain from any action capable of exacerbating the conflict.

My delegation is deeply concerned by the harsh humanitarian conditions that are inflicting so much suffering on the people of Somalia. It is particularly distressing to note the recrudescence of malnutrition and disease in areas that had shown significant progress in the past. In order to ameliorate this situation, it both urgent and important that all parties should extend their fullest cooperation to humanitarian organizations and personnel.

In this regard, we call on the Somali people to endeavour to do their utmost to prevent the deplorable harassment, beatings, abductions and killings of humanitarian personnel. We also call on United Nations agencies to redouble their efforts in achieving administrative efficiency and devising procedures for circumventing bureaucratic log-jams so that humanitarian assistance can be more expeditiously provided.

Moreover, the humanitarian situation will, in our view, continue to deteriorate so long as Mogadishu's main seaport remains closed and adequate security to protect the transport of humanitarian supplies is not provided.

My delegation believes that there is an urgent need for the international community to pursue new initiatives to break the impasse. To this end, the Indonesian delegation considers that now is an appropriate time to explore a wide range of options that would allow for both immediate and long-term responses.

One of the options available would consist in upgrading the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and by relocating it in Somalia as soon as circumstances permit. The Office should be headed by a resident, high-ranking officer who would not only provide the Council with timely and accurate assessments of unfolding developments but would also act as facilitator in assisting the Somali parties towards national reconciliation and towards a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

Furthermore, the Council may consider, as security conditions permit, sending a mission to Somalia, similar to the one sent in 1994, so that the Council is in a better position to respond more effectively.

It is the Indonesian delegation's hope that the actions taken by the Council will lead to a genuinely all-inclusive approach to reconciliation which would result in a lasting political settlement and the re-emergence of a civil society in Somalia. Only once these conditions are met can the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country be undertaken, with the assistance of the international community.

I shall conclude by stressing that the people of Somalia have already suffered for far too long. Indeed, it is our hope that as a consequence of our deliberations today, a clear signal will be sent to all parties to the conflict that we are calling on them to cease all hostilities immediately and to refrain from any activities that might prevent the peace process from moving forward.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, I should like to express our satisfaction at the Security Council's decision to hold a meeting today, open to all who wish to participate, for the purpose of exchanging views on the situation in Somalia. We hope that this discussion, which is a graphic illustration of the unwavering attention the international community is devoting to this problem, will help give fresh impetus to the efforts to restore peace and stability in Somalia.

Russia has always been a consistent advocate of using political means to settle the internal Somali crisis and at the same time preserve Somalia's territorial integrity.

We have repeatedly expressed our deep concern over the prolonged conflict there and the untold suffering of the Somali people. Unfortunately, the situation in Somalia continues to deteriorate, degenerating into what the Secretary-General aptly describes as "a debilitating stalemate". (*S/1996/42, para. 37*) The ceaseless military confrontation between the leaders of the main Somali

factions is blocking all political efforts to settle the conflict and is aggravating the already difficult humanitarian situation, particularly in areas caught up in hostilities. And there is the increased threat of epidemics.

We urgently appeal to the Somali factions to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of humanitarian and other international personnel and to open up, without preconditions, the principal seaport at Mogadishu and other transport facilities needed for providing humanitarian assistance.

Events in recent years in Somalia have shown that with the fluid internal political situation, the constantly changing configurations of military and political alliances, the crisis in Somalia is becoming increasingly persistent. The situation there is charged with confrontation, for the preservation of an approximate parity of strength among the major warring parties. This alone makes it foolish for these parties to attempt to resolve this conflict through force.

We appeal to all Somali leaders to refrain from violence, to put the interests of their country and people above their own political ambitions and immediately restore the process of consultations and negotiations, with a view to achieving reconciliation and the establishment of a national government on a broad basis. We are convinced that finding a lasting settlement to the Somali conflict requires agreement on methods and activation of the peace-keeping efforts of the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other regional organizations, neighbouring States and interested countries.

We believe it important that all these efforts be closely coordinated. In this regard, we must keep an equal distance from all of the warring Somali factions. Of special significance is clear compliance by all States with their obligations strictly to observe the complete arms embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia, in accordance with paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 733 (1992). They should also refrain from any actions which might further worsen an already difficult situation in that country.

A major role in encouraging the Somali parties to achieve peace might be played by the United Nations as well, in particular by coordinating the efforts of the international community in lending humanitarian assistance to the population of Somalia and also by carrying out individual programmes to revive and develop the most stable regions in the country.

We believe that in the final analysis it is still up to the Somali leaders. They bear the final responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and the restoration of peace in their own country. Their duty to their own people is to show the political will, which is necessary in order to achieve such a noble objective.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for facilitating the emerging practice of the Security Council to conduct open debates on important issues before it. The sheer number of countries which have decided to participate in today's debate is testimony to the usefulness of open debate.

The civil war and its devastating humanitarian consequences in Somalia have been with us for some time now.

The United Nations peace-keeping operations in Somalia have often come under criticism as a case of dismal failure. My delegation does not share this negative view. While the United Nations operation has not succeeded in resolving the internal conflict and rebuilding Somalia, its contribution in averting massive starvation should not be underestimated. As a troop-contributing country to the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), the Republic of Korea has been following the situation in Somalia with the utmost concern and attention. We express our solidarity and sympathy with the Somali people.

The continued United Nations involvement in Somalia after the withdrawal of UNOSOM II has also proved essential in helping to alleviate the severity of the suffering to which the Somali people have been subjected. We commend United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned for the commitment and dedication with which they are carrying out their humanitarian assistance efforts for the people of Somalia under trying conditions. The experience of the United Nations involvement in Somalia has nevertheless revealed the inherent limits of the international community's capability to contain the humanitarian consequences of a failed State, which has neither the capability of self-government nor the willingness to act upon international assistance.

It is saddening to note that the end of the Somali tragedy is nowhere in sight as yet. One year after the withdrawal of UNOSOM II, the political stalemate persists. Instability, inter-clan conflict, banditry and general lawlessness remain the order of the day. Despite the strenuous efforts of the international community, including Member States and various regional organizations, to bring the Somali factions together, national reconciliation remains elusive. The country still remains carved up by rival clans and factions.

On the humanitarian front, the situation is also getting worse. We are alarmed at reports that the delivery of food and medical supplies is being hindered by insecurity and logistical problems caused by the closure of Mogadishu seaport and airport at a time when a growing number of children suffer from malnutrition and the epidemic of cholera is spreading. The prospects for improvement of the situation are grim.

A prerequisite for the international community in playing any meaningful role for the Somali people is the security and safety of international personnel operating on the ground. In this regard, my delegation is deeply concerned over accounts of mistreatment directed at the humanitarian personnel, including harassment, beatings, abduction and killings. We strongly condemn these acts of violence and urge the Somali factions to cooperate fully with the international humanitarian organizations.

While the persistence of the dismal situation in Somalia is of the Somali leaders' own making, the international community cannot simply abandon the hapless Somali people to the vagaries of life brought about by the factional strife of their leaders. The United Nations must continue to be actively engaged in Somalia. It is in this perspective that my delegation wishes to offer its observations on what role the United Nations can play with regard to Somalia.

First, the United Nations has to monitor more closely the situation on the ground and political developments in the country. In this regard, while appreciating the role of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) operating out of Nairobi, we encourage the Secretary-General to transfer that office to Mogadishu as soon as the circumstances allow, as has already been proposed by the Ambassador of Chile. This will not only facilitate the basic tasks of information-gathering and contacts with the Somali factions, but is also a sensible way of demonstrating the firm commitment of the United Nations to the solution of the Somali problem.

Secondly, the United Nations must play a central role in facilitating and coordinating international humanitarian assistance to Somalia. Ensuring unimpeded access to areas in urgent and acute need of relief efforts by international personnel is a matter of the highest priority. This includes the reopening of Mogadishu seaport and airport, at least for humanitarian cargo.

The Security Council should warn General Aidid in unambiguous terms that the visa requirements that he decided to impose for entry into the country are unacceptable. The Council should also remind all leaders of Somali factions that they will be made individually accountable for the safety and security of all international humanitarian personnel operating in their respective areas of control.

Thirdly, the United Nations should play a more active role in coordinating international efforts and initiatives to promote a political settlement of the conflict through national reconciliation among warring factions in Somalia. In this respect, it is encouraging to note the constructive initiatives taken by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union to this end. We encourage the Secretary-General to build upon these initiatives and to consider the possibility of convening an international peace conference on Somalia, under the auspices of the United Nations, in close coordination with the regional organizations concerned.

Fourthly, the international community has the responsibility to ensure the implementation of the arms embargo established by resolution 733 (1992). In this connection, I wish to underline the need for the Council to remind all States, especially those neighbouring Somalia, of their legal obligations to observe a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia, in full compliance with the resolution.

In concluding, let me reiterate my conviction that the ultimate responsibility for bringing about lasting peace and stability rests with the Somali leaders themselves. The international community's role can succeed only when the Somali leaders have the political will and commitment to achieve a political settlement. We urge all Somali factions to rise above their parochial factional interests and move towards national reconciliation so that the Somali people may live in peace and prosperity.

My delegation hopes that the conclusions of this open debate will be duly acted upon and followed up by the Secretariat and the Security Council.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): I welcome this opportunity to focus attention once more on the subject of Somalia, and we congratulate you, Mr. President, on holding this open meeting to allow a full exchange of views. We believe that these public meetings are most useful.

At one time, the Council devoted its attention almost daily to the subject of Somalia. The United States is proud of its efforts in Somalia under the United Nations Unified Task Force (UNITAF) and the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). The United States and allied forces entered Somalia in December 1992 to end a famine of epic proportions. Several hundred thousand people had died. The lives of many more were at risk. The United States-led international intervention known as UNITAF quickly ended the famine, saving thousands of lives. UNOSOM continued this undertaking. It is important to note here that almost all Somalis, even those who are sharply critical of the subsequent United Nations action in their country, express gratitude for the international community's response to the famine.

Just over one year has passed since UNOSOM II forces withdrew from Somalia, on 2 March 1995. We had hoped that withdrawal would demonstrate to the Somali leaders the need to resolve their differences. We are disappointed that they have failed to make any significant progress towards national political reconciliation over the past year. Although Somalia experienced a sharp reduction in interfactional fighting over the past year, hopes for political reconciliation were dimmed by the seizure last September of the provincial capital of Baidoa in central Somalia, a city that was particularly hard hit during the famine, when more than 500 people a day died. Agriculturally rich Baidoa had become an area of relative peace and stability, and its seizure was a political step backwards. This episode has also made it more difficult for the donor nations to provide aid to Somalia. As the political stalemate and violence continue, the international donor community must increasingly direct its limited resources to more promising recipients.

Somalia remains a dangerous place, but predictions that widespread inter-clan fighting would resume as soon as the peace-keepers pulled out have not come true. Many areas of the country are peaceful and have formed functional, albeit rudimentary, local administrations.

In addition to the establishment of functional local authorities in many parts of the country, the other most promising development in Somalia has been the re-emergence of the private-sector economy. Most commerce in Somalia is on a small scale: tea shops, tailoring, petty import-export, market farming and the like. Some of the key pre-war exports have rebounded, and sectors employing new technology have emerged.

Livestock exports, which historically have accounted for some two thirds of hard-currency earnings, were at record-high levels in both 1994 and 1995. Banana exports have resumed, with the United States firm Dole challenging for a significant share of the market in this sector. A number of domestic and foreign firms are fishing along the Somali coast and exporting high-value seafoods. Four telecommunications firms, two with United States partners, operate cellular-telephone systems in Somalia.

In short, economic activity is moving forward in Somalia, a tribute to the Somali entrepreneurial class and a few intrepid foreign investors. But this private economic activity does little to support social services. Poverty still limits the access of many to food in the market. Health and education remain largely the purview of foreign humanitarian agencies, which are unable to reach all the population, especially the children.

The United Nations agencies have been addressing the humanitarian, social and economic concerns of the people of Somalia, who suffer at the hands of the uncaring factional leaders. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is feeding malnourished children. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is looking at ways to help the impoverished earn the money to afford food. Cholera is being fought. Medicines and foodstuffs are being stockpiled. All this is being done despite the insecurity that hampers efficient delivery of humanitarian aid in many parts of Somalia. The port of Mogadishu remains closed, even to shipments of relief supplies, adding to the cost and time needed to deal with urgent needs. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations must be commended for their bravery, perseverance and dedication to helping the helpless, who have not been able to look to their indigenous leadership for the basic necessities of life.

The United States has joined in the efforts of the United Nations. We have not abandoned Somalia and do not intend to. While we do not recognize or support any Somali group or faction, we remain in communication

with all the political groups in the country. The United States assistance programme for fiscal year 1995 totalled about $25 million. We will continue our aid programme, much of which consists of food. We are aware of the recent reports of food shortages and drought in Somalia. The United States and the international aid community are closely monitoring the food situation in order to prevent another famine. We call upon the factions in Somalia to reopen the port and to ensure that it remains open so that assistance can be delivered.

We join other members of the world community in urging the Somalis to form a broad-based national government that enjoys widespread support among all segments of the population. The major stumbling block remains the unwillingness of the major faction leaders to compromise. The Somali power brokers themselves must make the difficult decisions required to create a viable reconciliation process.

We call upon all the Somali factions to end the divisions that have pitted region against region and clan against clan. Somalia's leaders can and must do better than this. They must have the vision to set an example that upholds the common good of the Somali people.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): Let me state at the outset that Germany supports the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

When the public order in Somalia collapsed in 1991, when the Somali people suffered from fighting and famine and when more than a million Somalis fled to neighbouring countries, the international community shouldered its responsibility. First, the American-led operation "Restore Hope" prevented a further deterioration. Then the Security Council decided on the mandate of a regular peace-keeping operation. The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) was the first United Nations operation to which Germany contributed regular troops on a large scale. The German contingent comprised over 700 men.

Germany does not share the view that UNOSOM II was a failure. In many regions, a stabilization of the situation was achieved. Tens of thousands of people were saved from starvation. We admit, however, that UNOSOM II did not become the success we had wanted it to be. The reason is clear: peace and stability in a country depend in the first place on the forces in that country. Without the cooperation of all factions in Somalia, UNOSOM II could not bring about the desired peaceful solution to the internal conflict. UNOSOM II had to be withdrawn.

We again pay tribute to those men and women who served in that operation. We honour those peace-keepers who lost their lives in Somalia.

The United Nations has not abandoned Somalia. Political efforts and humanitarian assistance continue. Our meeting today, which is open to all Member States is proof of our ongoing commitment. We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for having taken this initiative, which, as a measure to increase the transparency of the Council's work, we welcome and support.

Unfortunately, there has been little movement until now towards a political dialogue between the warring factions or towards national reconciliation. We regret recent military activities that have further increased the suffering of the people. Those responsible for these actions must realize that no breakthrough will be achieved in that way. There is no single group or party that would be strong enough to effectively control the country.

A solution to the present situation can only be found through political dialogue. The Political Office of the United Nations has already established relations with those warring factions that are represented in Nairobi. These contacts could and should be further developed. As soon as the situation allows, the United Nations should also aim to extend its presence in the country. The United Nations Office has been able to gain a reputation for impartiality, so that it is being accepted by the warring factions — with the exception of one — as a partner for dialogue. It might make sense, therefore, to increase the number of personnel in the Office.

It has proved particularly difficult for the Political Office of the United Nations to initiate a dialogue with General Aidid. His insistence on being recognized as president of Somalia has so far prevented any negotiations with him about the political future of the country. At the same time, the destabilization of agriculturally fertile provinces constitutes a threat to the economic situation of the whole country.

In addition, a key problem for political dialogue is a general refusal to consider power sharing. However, the fact that no party alone is capable of controlling the country has led to the present impasse. Only the factions themselves can find a way out by changing their positions.

The efforts to establish basic administrative infrastructures at a local and regional level are a very positive sign. However, we are concerned over the difficulties of filling positions and dividing power, which may thwart timely progress. This decentralized process should under no circumstances result in the further break-up of the country.

The humanitarian situation appears to remain stable, in so far as the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been able to carry out activities in Somaliland, the Bari region and the north of the country. Here I would like to express my special gratitude and admiration to these agencies and non-governmental organizations for their courage and their commitment. I want to make a special point of this. In the face of the withdrawal of all diplomatic and comparable missions, they continue to assist the people of Somalia.

In the field of humanitarian assistance, since 1992 Germany has given bilateral aid amounting to approximately $60 million. That is in addition to what is being done by the European Union, of which we normally have a share of 30 per cent.

We call upon the warring parties not to impede or endanger the work of the humanitarian organizations, which do their utmost to alleviate the suffering of the people of Somalia despite the persistent instability.

We appeal to the warring factions to accept the good offices of the United Nations and to finally agree among themselves on a peaceful solution.

Mr.Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is a year since United Nations forces left Somalia. This meeting therefore represents an appropriate opportunity to review developments in Somalia, to exchange views and to consult on steps the international community should take to help establish a central authority that would enjoy the support of all parties and enable Somalia to regain stability, and the Somali people to enjoy prosperity and progress.

I extend our sincere thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I hope that the Council will continue to convene such meetings on various important issues in order to exchange information and the views of Member States.

Last year the Security Council addressed the crisis in Somalia on the basis of a report by the Secretary-General issued in January 1995 and through presidential statements. So far the international community has been unable to agree on playing a further role in Somalia. Can this situation continue? Will the international community continue to disregard the tragic situation in Somalia, which has been described as a failed State, in the context of what can be called benign neglect? In the light of the deteriorating situation in Somalia, I fear that continued disregard for it would transform that neglect into malignant neglect.

The Egyptian delegation calls for genuine change. We call upon the international community to shoulder its responsibility for the people of Somalia. The aim of the United Nations intervention in Somalia under Security Council resolution 794 (1992) was the establishment of a favourable climate for humanitarian relief operations. This intervention was undertaken under Chapter VII of the Charter, in view of the exceptional conditions prevailing in Somalia. The most pressing problems were the humanitarian tragedy, which was caused by starvation, the continuing civil war, which claimed the lives of thousands of innocent people, the total collapse of State institutions and the disappearance of central authority. That is why the term "a failed State" was used.

The United Nations has achieved great success at a humanitarian level, while its success in establishing social, community and political institutions to replace the State institutions destroyed by the civil war has been more limited. It has assisted in the establishment of a national police force and district and regional councils, and in strengthening the judiciary. However, the United Nations has not succeeded in laying down a framework for settlement and national reconciliation to which all parties are committed. Apart from contributing to the convening of the Addis Ababa Conference in March 1993 and the Nairobi Conference in 1994, all the efforts of the international community to influence the leadership of the clans and factions and prompt them to hold a serious and constructive dialogue on the future of the country have failed.

Today, the situation in Somalia is very similar to what it has been for the past four years. Stability is fragile; there is a complete lack of central authority; tribal leaders are vying for the State presidency without any of them achieving it. All this is accompanied by a lack of food which is especially dangerous in the light of the scarcity of resources, continued political tension, and the fact that the port of Mogadishu has been closed since last October.

It is vital that Somalia's humanitarian needs be met, especially given the reports of cholera and malnutrition; the international community must respond positively. That response should also extend to other aspects of the Somali problem.

The desperate conditions that persist in Somalia have not discouraged or thwarted the endeavours of many regional and international organizations to achieve a settlement in that country. The Organization of African Unity decided only a few days ago to dispatch a new mission to Somalia to establish direct contacts with the various factions and to assess the real situation. The League of Arab States has continued its efforts to establish channels of communication with all Somali factions and prominent individuals, and has proposed the convening of a meeting of all relevant international and regional organizations with a view to reaching a common understanding to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Somali people and to discussing ways to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis. The League of Arab States has also proposed sending a joint mission of representatives of regional and international organizations to meet with Somali leaders and has indicated its readiness to host that meeting and any preparatory meetings.

For its part, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has called for an international conference for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia, with the participation of all the Somali parties and all relevant regional and international organizations. It has dispatched a contact group to urge the resumption of dialogue and to discuss the convening of an international conference. And the European Union has carried out field missions through the special envoy of the European Commission; it is considering a number of options, *inter alia* with respect to governmental systems, that the Somalis could adopt to break the current deadlock. It is also considering a joint initiative by the European Union, regional organizations and a number of States concerned with the Somali question. Nor are neighbouring States sparing their efforts, as evidenced by the work of Prime Minister Zenawi of Ethiopia and President arap Moi of Kenya.

Turning to the role of the United Nations, there should be a follow-up to the ongoing commitment to the comprehensive international embargo on the supply of arms and military equipment to Somalia under Security Council 733 (1992), as well as active, comprehensive follow-up with respect to the political and humanitarian situation with a view to building State institutions and to carrying out post-conflict peace-building. But the fact is that none of this is taking place.

The delegation of Egypt considers it necessary to energize the role of the United Nations in Somalia, and to that end we wish to propose a number of ideas, any or all of which could be adopted to achieve real progress. First, we advocate the convening in a neighbouring State of a pan-Somali conference attended by representatives of all Somali regions.

Secondly, regional and international organizations should be encouraged to undertake a joint initiative to convince Somali leaders of the importance of dialogue. Thirdly, the United Nations and regional organizations should offer Somali leaders feasible alternatives, such as the establishment of a country-wide joint presidential council, similar to the current experiment in Liberia, or other means of power-sharing such as a federal or confederative system.

Fourthly, the role of the United Nations office in Nairobi should be enhanced; transferring its functions to Mogadishu should be considered when conditions permit. In this regard, I listened attentively to the representative of Chile, who put forward such a proposal, and to the representative of the Republic of Korea, who endorsed it.

Fifthly, the Security Council should dispatch a mission of Council members or a high-level envoy to assess the situation on the ground and to ascertain whether the time is ripe for making specific proposals.

We hope that these ideas will receive careful study. We are open to other initiatives proposed by other delegations interested in putting an end to what is happening in Somalia.

Egypt has a special interest in achieving stability in Somalia, owing to unique historical and cultural ties dating back to the reign of Queen Hatshepshut, who dispatched trade missions to the Kingdom of Punt 3500 years ago. Relations between Egypt and Somalia have evolved and have grown stronger throughout history. In this regard, I would note that Egypt participated in the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). At a time when some States were withdrawing their contingents, Egypt doubled its contribution, and has continued to this day to be fully prepared to participate.

Progress by the United Nations or other international and regional organizations depends on a

number of factors. The most important of these are: commitment by the international community not to recognize any authority in Somalia unless it represents all Somali communities and factions and enjoys general acceptance; continued application and strengthened monitoring of the international embargo on the supply of arms to Somalia; exerting all possible pressure on the Somali parties to get the process back on track, and putting the options before them so that they can choose those that are most suitable and acceptable; and last but not least, continued provision by the international community of development and humanitarian assistance of all kinds, even-handedly to all parts of Somalia.

I wish in conclusion to emphasize that the basic responsibility for stability in Somalia lies with the people of Somalia; their leaders must shoulder this responsibility in the full view of the international community. At the same time, we must recognize the need for and the importance of action by the United Nations to help the Somali people overcome its ordeal.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The Security Council was first seized of the situation in Somalia at the beginning of 1992. The action taken by the Council at that time had two main objectives: to promote national reconciliation and to put an end to the very serious humanitarian crisis besetting that country as a result of the war.

The Security Council has devoted great energy to the Somali crisis. It has adopted some 20 resolutions on this subject. Those resolutions authorized the deployment of two peace-keeping operations, at a cost of some $2 billion, and of a multinational force of 37,000 men to enable the Somalis to restore peace in the wake of a conflict in which more than 300,000 people died, most of them of malnutrition.

In humanitarian terms, the international community's efforts were successful for a time. Famine was checked, health facilities were restored, schools were reopened, and the country's economy seemed to be improving. The Secretary-General made mention of this positive trend in his latest report, submitted to us on 19 January 1996. However, more recent information is much more disturbing, leading us to fear a deterioration of the situation.

In the political sphere, however, there has been no improvement. For more than a year, the process of national reconciliation has been at a standstill. The Blue Helmets' departure, as expected, led to a resumption of fighting between factions. Following the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), it was decided to maintain there a Political Office, which was established on 31 May 1995, entrusted with continuing to promote the process of national reconciliation. That Office, established in Nairobi, was to be transferred to Somalia as soon as circumstances allowed. This has not been possible. The current situation suggests, unfortunately, that there has been no change in that respect.

The situation is deteriorating daily, now endangering the delivery of humanitarian aid. The warlords, in particular General Aidid, bear full responsibility for this deterioration. Testifying to their complete lack of civic-mindedness, these leaders show every day that they prefer the status quo to a negotiation under whose terms they would have to make concessions.

Unfortunately, the civilian population is once again paying the price. The Secretariat has informed us that malnutrition is re-emerging throughout Somalia, despite good harvests. The health situation is disturbing: cases of cholera have been reported. Humanitarian agencies are finding it increasingly difficult to deliver aid to certain parts of the country. Since the port of Mogadishu was closed in October 1995, the cost of transporting humanitarian aid has considerably increased, as it must now be sent by air.

This situation is not acceptable, and neither is the recent decision by General Aidid to require, purely for the purpose of obtaining recognition by the international community, visas for those in Somalia who are trying to help the Somali people. The faction leaders are responsible for the safety of humanitarian personnel working in that country. They must also know that the international community does not have unlimited resources. It is becoming more difficult day by day for the agencies to mobilize donors for a conflict seemingly without end.

France pays tribute to all those who are still working in Somalia under increasingly difficult conditions. It hopes that Somalia will not be left to its own devices and that the Somali people will continue to receive aid. France would also request that every effort be made to promote national reconciliation and that no possibility, however slim, of restoring civil peace in Somalia be overlooked.

If we wait too long, the entire country may collapse. The north-west is already drifting away from the other provinces. Soon it will no longer be possible to preserve the territorial unity of the country, which had been a goal of the Security Council.

What can the international community do to prevent the collapse of Somalia? More precisely, what can we do that we have not already tried? If the Somali factions are not able to agree and to lead their country, and if an action on the part of the Organization of the United Nations does not satisfy them, perhaps we could, as is being done in Central Africa, encourage mediation by African public figures acceptable to the factions. Those public figures would be charged with listening to the factions and then organizing a reconciliation conference, the results of which could then be supported by the international community.

Along these lines, we continue to believe that the countries of the Horn of Africa, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States, have a key role to play in restoring peace to the region. Thus far, the efforts of regional actors have yielded scant results. If those African countries could give their concrete support to an initiative led by one or several African public figures, mediation would gain strength and credibility.

Finally, thus far the message of the Security Council to the factions has had no impact. The factions believe that the Council is expressing the particular interest of only some of its members. Could we not show that this is not the case and that the international community as a whole disapproves of the policy pursued by the warlords? To this end, we should consider organizing a debate in the General Assembly. In this way, all the Members of the United Nations would have an opportunity to express themselves on the subject and to inform the parties to the conflict in Somalia that the path of violence can only be a dead end.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): A political stalemate and a serious humanitarian situation prevail in Somalia, threatening to thwart the achievement of the goals of national reconciliation and lasting peace in that country.

The Somali factions have not yet fulfilled their commitments to hold an international reconciliation conference and to form a broad-based government. The lack of a negotiated settlement among the Somalis continues to be the cause of political instability, insecurity and far-reaching deterioration of the economic, social and humanitarian situation in that country.

The neglect of the consultation and negotiation process for achieving peace and national reconciliation and the Somali parties' lack of cooperation on security issues are the very factors that last year hampered progress towards the goals of the United Nations in Somalia and prevented the renewal of the mandate of United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), whose timely intervention in 1992, together with international humanitarian assistance, contributed to saving many lives and to alleviating the suffering of the civilian population.

We find it disheartening that, since the withdrawal of UNOSOM II, security conditions in Somalia have continued to deteriorate. The occupation of Baidoa and the fighting near Kismayo in September and December 1995 delayed all the efforts aimed at national reconciliation that were being made by the Somali Salvation Alliance and the Somali National Alliance, and also affected the personal safety and work of United Nations officials and agencies working in those areas.

It is a source of concern to my delegation that no tangible progress is being made towards national reconciliation and the establishment of a broad-based national government in Somalia. We are concerned also at the situation of insecurity, the difficulties in distributing emergency assistance and in rehabilitating several areas of the country, and the obstacles faced by the agencies of the United Nations and its associated international entities in the course of their normal work.

We therefore believe that the international community must continue assisting the Somali people, firstly by helping them achieve a political solution to the conflict and, secondly, by committing enough resources to alleviate their urgent humanitarian needs.

Accordingly, we recognize the importance of the continued efforts by the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the European Union and Somalia's neighbouring States to promote national dialogue in the context of the search for a solution to the crisis in Somalia, and recognize also the importance of the willingness on the part of the international humanitarian and the non-governmental organizations to go on providing assistance for rehabilitation and reconstruction in those areas where the Somalis are guaranteeing

security and offering their cooperation. We recognize further the importance of maintaining and upgrading the United Nations Political Office for Somalia so that it can continue its contacts with the Somali factions and neighbouring governments, keep up close cooperation with the regional organizations and monitor events in Somalia.

This willingness on the part of the international community demonstrates its increasing interest in re-establishing peace in a country that has been laid low by violence and political ambitions, and deserves to be reciprocated by the leaders of the Somali factions, who should set aside their differences and restart the process of consultations and negotiations towards national reconciliation and the establishment of a broad-based representative national government.

As the Council has stated on a number of occasions, the international community can only facilitate, promote and cooperate with the parties to the process; it cannot impose solutions. Responsibility for reconciliation and for restoring peace lies ultimately with the Somalis themselves. My delegation therefore urges them to settle the conflict by peaceful means and cooperate fully with the international community. We also call on them to cooperate with a view to ensuring that emergency assistance can be distributed without difficulty and, towards that end, to reopen, without conditions, the seaport and airport at Mogadishu.

Lastly, my delegation believes that, in light of the situation in Somalia, the arms embargo imposed under resolution 733 (1992) must be kept up. We believe also that communication with all the Somali factions and with well-known Somali figures must be maintained, and my delegation would therefore support sending a Security Council mission to Somalia to meet with the faction leaders and convey to them a message from the Council urging them to resume negotiations.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom very much welcomes the developing practice of open debates on issues of urgent concern such as we are discussing today. The large number of speakers and participants, particularly from African delegations, is a good sign of the vitality of this procedure and should in itself send a message to the Somali people that they are not forgotten. It should also express to the Somali leaders that, while the international community stands ready to help, it is equally frustrated at their failure to make peace and establish a representative and functioning government.

Earlier this morning we attended, in the Economic and Social Council Chamber, the inauguration of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. Somalia seems to be a blot on that otherwise brightening scene. At one time, there were over 28,000 peace-keepers serving with the United Nations Operation in Somalia, and 209 of them lost their lives. The United Nations spent $1.64 billion on peace-keeping in Somalia, and donors have disbursed over $500 million in humanitarian and other assistance. My own Government has given $80 million since 1991 for relief work in Somalia. Had the Somali leaders decided otherwise at the end of 1994, we would probably still be there in a much bigger way.

The continuing need for humanitarian assistance in Somalia is obvious, but humanitarian activity requires a minimum of cooperation from the parties on the ground. The problem is not so much a lack of food and medicine as an inability to deliver it to those most in need.

In much of Somalia — the north is to some extent an exception — that cooperation is not forthcoming, and international personnel are subject to harassment and attacks which the Security Council has many times condemned in the most forthright way. Like others, we pay a tribute to the efforts of the non-governmental organizations and individuals who persevere despite these dangers.

United Nations and regional organizations should do all that they can to rekindle efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement and national reconciliation in Somalia. We welcome the continuing efforts of the Organization of African Unity.

In the final analysis, a peaceful settlement in Somalia and the establishment of viable national institutions can be achieved only by agreement between the Somalis themselves. The Security Council last set out its views on the situation in its presidential statement of 24 January this year (S/PRST/1996/4). this remains our clear message, and we must hope that it will be carried through the international media to the Somali people and produce a rethinking by the leaders concerned of their responsibilities towards their people.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter, dated 15 March 1996, from the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/1996/196, and reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request you that during the meeting of the Security Council devoted to the Consideration of the Situation in Somalia, the Council extend an invitation, under Rule 39 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, to H.E. Mr. Ibrahima Sy, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations."

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Mr. Ibrahima Sy.

It is so decided.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): We are very grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on Somalia. It is indeed a fully justified and timely initiative.

In the not too distant past, the international community undertook a tremendous effort to help Somalia. Hope was restored. The famine was successfully ended. Over 100,000 lives were saved. The economy started to show slight signs of recovery. Yet the international community failed because it was not able to contribute effectively to solving the political problems haunting Somalia. As a result, the country was practically abandoned.

I fear that there is no other State Member of the United Nations where there is not a single functioning diplomatic mission. The information on which we base our views comes mainly from unofficial sources, most often located outside Somalia. The task of changing this situation will be very difficult indeed, since there is a really high risk involved. Memories of the United Nations Operation in Somalia still dog the international community, which is understandable but must be overcome.

As do many others, the Polish delegation believes that only national reconciliation can bring peace and stability to Somalia. It is the responsibility of the leaders of that country to seek such dialogue and political solutions instead of hostility and violence.

May I at this point recall the presidential statement of 6 April 1995 adopted by the Security Council, which *inter alia* indicates that

"The Security Council remains convinced that only a genuinely representative and broad-based approach to reconciliation will bring about a lasting political settlement and allow for the re-emergence of a civil society in Somalia." (*S/PRST/1995/15*)

These words have not lost their relevance, but today, a year after, it is even more difficult to put them into operation. There is nothing promising in the behaviour of political leaders of Somalia, who leave no room for optimism. Therefore, we keep urging the warring parties to refrain from confrontation and to think seriously about the future of their country and people.

But, since there are serious reasons to believe that this will be yet another unheeded appeal, perhaps we should give a thought to strengthening a mechanism which would allow the United Nations to at least effectively communicate with those involved in political rivalries in Somalia and with the people of Somalia.

The Security Council should have an exhaustive picture of the state of affairs in that country. Otherwise, our debates might become meaningless. Also, despite all difficulties, the Security Council must have the means of conveying its messages to Somalia.

These important tasks taken up by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, whose significant role in facilitating peace and promoting political dialogue among the Somali factions deserves our highest consideration, should at this stage become our priority; the Office would have to be given unequivocal support of Member States in all respects.

In the meantime, special attention should be given by the international community to the rigorous observance of Security Council resolution 733 (1992), which imposed the embargo on arms deliveries to Somalia.

In conclusion, may I state that we must not forget the people of Somalia. And we have to show that we care.

Let me also take this opportunity to say how highly we appreciate those who, regardless of the increasing danger and cost, keep delivering humanitarian aid to the population of Somalia. They also need our support.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation is in favour of holding an open debate on the Somali question. We also welcome this opportunity. We believe that such a debate can focus the attention of the international community on Somalia

and facilitate new and effective efforts of interested States in seeking a solution to the Somali question.

At the end of 1994, as a member of the Security Council delegation, I visited Somalia. During the few days of my stay, I was so shocked at what I saw that I could hardly eat or sleep. The once-beautiful Mogadishu — the pride of East Africa — was now reduced to complete ruin. No buildings emerged unscathed by war damage. The airport and the harbour were closed. The infrastructure was totally destroyed. Shots were heard all the time. Society was in turbulence, and the people were unable to carry out a normal life.

At the time, with a heavy heart, I appealed to the leaders of Somalia that peace was of the utmost importance and only peace could save Somalia. To our regret, the situation in Somalia today is hardly in any way different from that of a year ago. There is no prospect of a solution bringing peace.

The Chinese Government and people have always been deeply concerned by developments in Somalia, and have great sympathy for the plight of the Somali people. We have always believed that the key to the solution of the Somali question is national reconciliation. Through broad-based political consultations, all factions in Somalia should, in the general interest of the country and the nation, set aside their differences, sit down and talk to each other. National reconciliation is the only way out.

In the final analysis, the Somali question can only be resolved by the Somali people themselves. But the international community has an unshirkable responsibility, too. The United Nations, the Security Council in particular, has at least a partial responsibility for the situation in Somalia today.

We are always of the view that the United Nations cannot just leave Somalia alone. That is why we support the work of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) in Nairobi. But we also believe that this limited presence is not enough. The United Nations should make a greater effort, and we hope that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the African States and the Arab States can play a greater role in this regard.

Many proposals have been made in previous statements. The Chinese delegation believes they are worthy of our serious consideration. China, too, stands ready to do its share in this regard.

Finally, we hope and firmly believe that with the support of the international community the Somali people will overcome the present difficulties and set out upon the road of peace, rehabilitation and reconstruction at an early date.

Mr. Queta (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): I would like first to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for proposing this enlarged meeting of the Security Council in order to discuss the political situation in Somalia. We think that enlarged meetings are useful, making possible the participation of a number of representatives, who will no doubt make their contribution to the quest for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia.

The international community — in particular, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and international humanitarian organizations — are making efforts to bring humanitarian assistance to the population of Somalia affected by a civil war which in our view has lasted far too long. We continue to believe that as long as the warring parties maintain their radical positions a negotiated solution will not be possible in that country. We repeat our conviction that the United Nations must not abandon the Somali people and that it must continue to play an important role in helping the parties to reach a compromise, with a view to finding a comprehensive political solution and creating a government of national unity.

My Government has always welcomed and supported the efforts of the international community on behalf of that country. We believe, however, that the political leaders and factions and all the movements in Somalia should seize the opportunity offered by this international good will to set aside their differences and restore confidence and security, because the ultimate responsibility for national reconstruction and the rebuilding of their country rests with the Somali people themselves.

Guinea-Bissau is concerned about the lack of any real progress towards national reconciliation in Somalia, and deeply perturbed by the persistence of deliberate obstruction of the delivery of food and medical supplies essential to the survival of the population.

We hail the courageous efforts of United Nations bodies and the dedication of the international humanitarian organizations, and we ask them to continue

to help the people of Somalia to ease their sufferings and avoid a new disaster, because, as we all know, an epidemic of certain diseases has recently emerged in that country. This will most certainly have serious consequences for neighbouring countries that have already been affected by the crisis in Somalia.

My delegation deplores the deaths of personnel of international organizations in the course of their humanitarian work. We urgently appeal to the parties to the conflict to refrain from any attempt to threaten the lives of people who are sparing no effort to help a population that has been devastated by the civil war. We ask them to take every step necessary to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel dispatched to the field to provide humanitarian assistance.

We are concerned that, in contravention of Security Council resolution 733 (1992), arms trafficking continues in that country. We would remind States that they are under an obligation fully to respect the general and complete embargo imposed under paragraph 5 of that resolution in connection with all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia, since non-compliance with the embargo only exacerbates tensions.

In conclusion, we pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the European Union, the Organization of African Unity, Somalia's neighbours and other agencies for their efforts to find a comprehensive political solution in Somalia. We ask the international community to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the Somali people with a view to bringing the various factions closer together and leading them to the negotiating table in the search for such a solution in Somalia.

We ask the international community to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Somalia so as finally to banish the ever-present threat of war in that country.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Botswana.

Five years ago, a devastating famine and a destructive civil war catapulted Somalia to the front pages of the world news media and the forefront of the conscience of the international community. The gruesome pictures that appeared on our television screens will for ever remain indelible in our minds. They troubled the consciences of all men and women of goodwill. The United Nations had to intervene in 1992 in the face of this humanitarian catastrophe. When the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) withdrew exactly a year ago this month, it had succeeded in rescuing the people of Somalia from hunger and starvation. In other words, UNOSOM II had managed to attain the humanitarian goals for which it was initially established. It was only the attempts to restore political sanity in the country that were less successful and contributed in the end to the withdrawal of the mission in 1995.

It is sad indeed that, just one year after the departure of UNOSOM II, a new humanitarian crisis is emerging in Somalia in areas that had shown significant improvement in the past. Malnutrition and disease have resurfaced. In his recent report to the sixty-third ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Secretary-General of that Organization stated:

> "the food situation throughout the country is very grave, with a high degree of starvation and malnutrition being observed".

It is even more disheartening that most of the malnutrition cases stem not from a lack of food in the country, but from the lack of access to food and feeding centres.

Sadly, the international humanitarian organizations are being hindered from reaching those parts of the population that are in desperate need of assistance. Equally, it is most unfortunate that, after half a decade, the Somali faction leaders have not realized the futility of their quest to resolve their differences through the barrel of the gun. The insufferable deaths, the massive destruction and the untold human suffering they have visited upon their people are indefensible. It is time that the Somali clan-based faction leaders placed the interests of the country and the long-suffering people of Somalia above their personal and political ambitions. They should engage in dialogue aimed at finding a peaceful settlement to their political differences, as do all good leaders who have the interests of their country and people at heart.

Somalia, whether we like it or not, is a failed State. The state structures disintegrated and collapsed in 1991 with the demise of President Mohamed Siad Barre's regime. The country has neither a recognized Government nor a legitimate central authority. After noting that the various factions engaged in deliberate and arbitrary detentions and killings of clan and political opponents, as well as noting the absence of legal

structures to provide redress for human rights abuses and other crimes, the November 1995 report of Amnesty International continues:

> "taking hostage UN and relief agency staff and other civilians, rape, torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners, including punishment of amputation and flogging, summary executions, and forced displacement of minority communities are evident everywhere".

This is not encouraging at all, to say the least. It is clear that anarchy and lawlessness reign supreme in the country. Yet the existence of the people of Somalia is a reality that we cannot deny. We cannot just forget the people of Somalia. They are an integral part of our common human existence. We can neither wish them away nor consciously leave them to their own wretched devices to suffer and die in total abandonment. The United Nations, this enshrinement of our collective desire for the establishment of an international political environment characterized by peace and understanding within and among nations, cannot afford to be a passive observer of the unfortunate drama that daily mars the lives of the Somalis.

True to their calling, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and other United Nations agencies and programmes have made the presence of the United Nations felt in a very dangerous environment. The presence of international relief agencies and other non-governmental organizations in Somalia bears testimony to the determination of the international community to resist the destruction of a part of the human race.

While it is appreciated that the United Nations will continue to play a crucial role in the humanitarian field, it must be made clear to the Somali leaders that humanitarian assistance cannot be sustained in a conflict situation, nor can it be substituted for a permanent political solution. It is imperative that the Somali faction leaders cooperate fully with these agencies and ensure the safety of their personnel as they undertake their noble tasks, including assisting the Somalis to eliminate the reported outbreaks of cholera in Mogadishu and the central regions before they assume epidemic proportions.

The restoration of peace and a united Somali State is the primary responsibility of the leaders and people of Somalia. They must understand that it is not the wish of the international community to turn Somalia into a Trust Territory. The search for a solution to the political crisis in the country lies squarely in the hands of the faction leaders. The international community can only help them to help themselves. It is not in the interests of anybody to witness the self-destruction of Somalia. There is an urgent need for coordinated efforts aimed at encouraging a comprehensive and negotiated political settlement in that war-torn country.

The problem with the Somali faction leaders is that they all want peace — but on their own terms. The big question, therefore, is whether a solution to the Somali crisis is still possible. I wish one could say with certainty that it is. The OAU is trying its hand in this crisis and it must enjoy the support of the United Nations. The United Nations itself has a Political Office in Nairobi to monitor the situation in Somalia. There is clearly an absolute need to engage all the faction leaders in a constructive dialogue leading to the convening of a national conference. We support all the helpful proposals made by our colleagues who have already spoken. Surely there must be a solution somewhere among Farah Aidid, Atto, Ali Mahdi and the leadership of the break-away "Somaliland Republic". The international community cannot simply run out of ideas in a situation which threatens yet another humanitarian crisis of unimaginable proportions.

I resume my function as President of the Council

The next speaker is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the African Group.

Since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia nearly a year ago, the situation in that country, which remains uncontrollable, continues to worsen. That constitutes a source of anxiety for the international community.

In the Nairobi declaration of 24 March 1994, the factions expressed their intention to work towards national reconciliation. That has not come about, and disagreement persists over the formation of a national Government. Meanwhile, sporadic fighting continues,

creating constant insecurity and exacerbating rivalries between the factions, which only increases the general frustration at the inability to restore lasting peace in Somalia. Humanitarian activities and the delivery of international assistance are seriously hampered.

Given these conditions, we believe that there is no alternative but to intensify efforts to lead the Somali factions towards achieving solidly-based national reconciliation so that they can dedicate themselves to the reconstruction of their country.

I pay tribute to the Secretary-General, who, through his representative, the Director of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, continues to follow developments closely. He is working steadily to encourage the Somali factions to reach agreement, while lending support to initiatives aimed at achieving the same end.

Regionally, the Organization of African Unity — especially through the central organ of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution — has consistently been addressing the political and humanitarian situation in Somalia and encouraging activities that may contribute to the restoration of lasting peace in the country.

Meeting in Addis Ababa from 26 to 28 February 1996, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity urged the Somali leaders to pursue dialogue with a view to establishing a broad-based national authority for achieving national reconciliation. The African Ministers also decided that the tripartite mission, comprising Ethiopia, Tunisia and the Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity, would make a further visit to Somalia to maintain direct contact with the various Somali factions and assess the situation on the ground.

In addition to those efforts, we believe that the international community must mobilize in order to express resolutely its commitment to the Somali people. It should coordinate its actions so as to give the Somali people some hope of returning to normal life, and eliminate the feeling that they have been abandoned to their fate.

To that end, we urge that the following actions be taken. First, the Security Council should pursue and reinforce its interest in the question of Somalia, the first step being to send a mission to explore the prospects for national reconciliation. Secondly, a common strategy should be adopted by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference with a view to facilitating national reconciliation. Thirdly, a joint mission should be dispatched, consisting of high-level representatives of international and regional organizations, to convey to the leaders and factions the desire of the international community to help the Somali people overcome the grave crisis threatening its survival. This has already been advocated by the League of Arab States. Fourthly, an attempt should be made, using independent political figures of international stature, to narrow the gap between the different positions and attitudes of the factions. Fifthly, the United Nations Office in Nairobi should be strengthened in two ways: by appointing to its head either an Assistant Secretary-General or a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and by giving it the financial and human resources to enable it to discharge its task properly. At a later stage it would be advisable to consider transferring the Office to Mogadishu if progress has been made with regard to security guarantees by the Somali factions.

Some of these activities and initiatives — none of which precludes any of the others — could be implemented soon, while others would require more favourable circumstances. Such activities would prove the determination of the international community to give Somalia the support and assistance it needs to emerge from the tragedy it has endured for years.

I hail the tireless endeavours carried out in Somalia by the specialized agencies and by other humanitarian agencies. In the face of the difficulties they face as they strive to carry out their tasks, they have provided continuous assistance with a view to meeting essential food, social and educational needs. The return of large numbers of refugees has only added to the problems faced by those who organize these emergency assistance operations.

In the light of the role played by humanitarian activities in preventing a return to the tragic plight the population endured, and in particular in addressing a deteriorating health situation, malnutrition and the threat of famine, these must be strengthened through increased support from the international community. There is hardly any need to emphasize how essential it is to ensure the safety and security of these activities, so that the population can benefit from this assistance under the best possible conditions. In this connection, the embargo on the supply of arms to the factions must be scrupulously applied. Member States must ensure full compliance, defy would-be traffickers and refrain from any violations.

It is urgent that the Somali factions return to the negotiating table and enable dialogue to prevail if they are to break this deadlock, which is only prolonging the suffering of the people. We believe that only the Somalis themselves can restore peace and stability to their country. The political will of faction leaders to effect national reconciliation without exclusions is the principal condition for achieving that objective.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Guinea. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Camara (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation wishes first of all to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I wish also to pay well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United States, for the fine work achieved last month.

My thanks go also to the Secretary-General, whose initiatives and activities have always helped arrest the scourge of war — and sometimes to avert war in countries whose peoples are threatened with fratricidal conflict, as they are in Somalia.

It gives us pleasure to participate in today's debate on the situation in Somalia. We are pleased that after a long silence the members of the Security Council have remembered that millions of men, women and children in Somalia continue to suffer the inhuman consequences of a fratricidal war. The suffering of the Somali people remains of great concern to my country, for the Somali crisis is more than a regrettable internal conflict: it is a genuine, serious threat to the security and stability of the entire subregion.

I am grateful to you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting; we believe it will have positive effects on the security of the region. We are convinced that this debate will yield successful solutions for alleviating the moral and material suffering of the Somali people, who are the innocent victims of a crisis.

My delegation cannot forget the considerable and intensive efforts of the international community to provide help and humanitarian assistance to the victims of war and famine in Somalia through effective, coordinated efforts under Security Council auspices. We thank all those who have provided help and humanitarian assistance to the Somali people.

Since December 1995, my country, the Republic of Guinea, has presided over the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; as Chairman of the group of members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the United Nations, my delegation is pleased to recall that at the twenty-third session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Guinea, States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference reiterated their commitment to the restoration and preservation of the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Somalia.

That conference noted with appreciation the efforts of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to bring national reconciliation to Somalia and to relieve the suffering of the Somali people, in cooperation with the States of the region, the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity, in the context of a joint approach. It called for the continuation of these efforts and requested the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to dispatch a contact group to urge the various Somali groups to resume dialogue to achieve national reconciliation. The conference called for the convening of an international conference on peace and national reconciliation in Somalia pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, with the participation of all Somali parties and the international and regional organizations concerned.

My delegation appeals once more to all States, and in particular to the neighbours of Somalia, to cooperate in implementing the arms embargo imposed by resolution 733 (1992). We urge all Somali factions to engage in negotiations and constructive dialogue aimed at finding a solution through peaceful means. In that connection, my delegation remains convinced that to build a path to national reconciliation and peace in Somalia, all the factions must create within the country conditions that will enable the international community to carry out its efforts towards peace and reconstruction.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea for the kind words she addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Kenya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Owade (Kenya): I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the important post of President of the Security Council for the month of March. We extend similar congratulations to the Government and the people of our sister country, Botswana, not only on its able and dynamic chairmanship of the Council, but also on the brilliant contributions you, Sir, and your country have made since Botswana assumed a non-permanent seat in the Council in January 1995. We are very proud of your innovative thinking and ingenuity and are confident that the Council will benefit profoundly from your wise leadership. We pay a similar tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United States, and to her great country for a very successful presidency in the month of February.

Kenya shares an 800-kilometre border with Somalia. The ethnic populations along the border region of the two sister countries are the same people. Naturally, therefore, we take great interest in the situation in Somalia, which is the subject on the agenda of the Council today. As neighbours having long-standing historical and cultural ties to Somalia, the Kenyan people can never enjoy their sleep when there is turmoil across the border.

My delegation made a statement before the Security Council on 4 November 1994, when the Council was debating the resolution on the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). In that statement, we drew to the attention of the Council the stark realities of the situation in Somalia and the dangers posed by the premature withdrawal of UNOSOM II. We appealed for pragmatism and perseverance on the part of the United Nations in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Somalia. We endeavoured to remind the Council that two of the principal missions of the United Nations — namely, the maintenance of international peace and security and humanitarian relief — had not been accomplished. We urged — indeed, pleaded with — the Council to wait a little longer to allow for the establishment of a central authority in Somalia by facilitating the national efforts at reconciliation.

It is regrettable that our plea was in vain, for the Council proceeded to withdraw UNOSOM II from Somalia almost with haste, thereby abandoning the unfortunate and helpless people of that country to fend for themselves. More than a year has passed since the withdrawal; the situation in Somalia is still grim, and no solutions are in sight. In contrast, we have noted that the Council has never tired of seeking solutions to international conflicts in other parts of the world — conflicts even more protracted than the Somali one — and we wonder why.

While Kenya has continually appealed to the faction leaders in Somalia to show more flexibility and dedication in bringing the conflict to an end, the innocent, ordinary Somali people cannot understand, to this day, why the international community deserted them in their real time of need.

It is our hope that the mistakes of Somalia, which have haunted — and, we believe, will continue to haunt — this Organization for a long time will never be repeated.

We would be remiss if we did not express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has always maintained that Somalia should not be abandoned by the United Nations. In his latest report, the Secretary-General has reiterated that the Security Council should continue to assist the Somali people to achieve a political settlement and to provide humanitarian and other support services. In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's decision to establish a small Political Office, which is operating from Nairobi until circumstances allow it to be transferred to Mogadishu. We support the proposals by the delegation of Tunisia regarding the strengthening of that Office.

We also welcome the report that the United Nations Political Office for Somalia has been doing a valuable job, which is appreciated not only by the Somali people but also by the faction leaders. These activities should be enhanced so as to accelerate the political process. We agree with those who have often reiterated that the solution to the Somali problem lies squarely with its people, and in particular with the faction leaders.

Kenya also acknowledges the serious efforts at reconciliation between the faction leaders. President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya has warmly and openly welcomed the delegations of the Somali faction leaders in Nairobi and urged them to compromise among themselves in order to find a broad-based solution to their problems. These efforts are well covered in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report (S/1996/42). We also take note of the many other efforts made and initiatives taken to advance the consultations.

The Secretary-General describes the situation in Somalia in the following words:

> "Since the withdrawal of UNOSOM II, the security situation in Somalia has been characterized by political instability, inter-clan conflict, banditry and general lawlessness". *(S/1996/42, para. 25)*

This is indeed a worrisome situation. The humanitarian needs of the country are even more stark. The people of Somalia continue to suffer from a shortage of essential commodities, such as food, and basic amenities, such as schools and health services. Epidemic diseases such as cholera continue to pose serious threats to the lives of the people. There are also warnings of a crop failure, which must be taken seriously to avoid another catastrophe.

Kenya wishes to seize this opportunity to appeal to the international community and, in particular, to the humanitarian agencies not to tire, but to continue to assist the Somali people in these times of dire need.

The Security Council must continue to treat the situation in Somalia as a threat to international peace and security and must augment the efforts that are being made by regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It cannot run away from the responsibility bestowed upon it by the Charter. Arms continue to be imported into the country. Tension between the faction leaders is still high. Basic infrastructure is still non-existent. Mogadishu's international airport is still closed, as is the seaport.

The United Nations could do much more to make a difference in Somalia. We believe that it is the only hope. We are confident, however, that under your wise and dynamic leadership, Mr. President, the Security Council will address the Somali issue more seriously than perhaps it has done in the past. Kenya, as a neighbour of Somalia, will continue to extend its cooperation and support.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining.

In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Swaziland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council during its consideration of the situation in Somalia, a subject of great importance to us all.

Allow me also to express my profound gratitude in seeing you, a native of a sister country, Botswana, presiding over this gathering, and in this endeavour I wish you good success.

I would be remiss in my duty, Sir, if I did not congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United States, Mrs. Madeleine Albright, who also conducted the work of the Council successfully.

We further thank the Security Council, through you, Sir, for affording interested Member States the opportunity to participate in the formal meetings of the Security Council pertaining to matters of great importance. We are hopeful that this practice will continue so as to ensure transparency in the work and decision-making process of the United Nations, as expressed in Article 15, paragraph 1, of our Charter.

It is now a year since the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) scaled back its operations in Somalia. At that time, the overwhelming perception was that the Somali people knew best what was good for them. Thenceforth, Somalia ceased to make news media headlines, and the focus of the international community shifted elsewhere.

In the Security Council, it was, and continues to be, stated that the people of Somalia — especially the leadership — bear the ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and restoring peace. We too, Sir, support that assertion.

Unfortunately, the plight of the Somali people remains in limbo. It is obvious that Somalia, like a sick doctor, cannot cure itself of the ills that afflict it, without the support of the international community. We are convinced that the United Nations remains an irreplaceable instrument in forging a lasting solution for peace, for which the deserving people of Somalia have been yearning for a very long time.

The report (S/1996/42) of the United Nations Secretary-General dated 19 January 1996 informed us that harassment, beatings and the abduction of international humanitarian organizations' personnel had forced the United Nations agencies to relocate, thus hindering the smooth delivery of assistance to Somalia.

Similar observations were made by the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity in his recent report, CM/1912, presented to the 63rd session of the Council of Ministers, meeting in Addis Ababa from 26 to 28 February 1996, on the situation in Somalia. In particular, in paragraph 3, on the question of peace and national reconciliation, he stated:

> "If anything at all, it would appear that the situation has undergone some degree of retrogression in some respects."

We are perturbed to learn about recent reports, on 9 March 1996, concerning the senseless assassination of a noted peace activist, Mr. Elman Mohamed, and we deeply regret further loss of life. We hold accountable all those responsible for these killings, as well as the leaders of the warring clans who are reluctant to commit themselves to a meaningful dialogue that will lead to a lasting peace in Somalia.

Equally, the Security Council should not be discouraged by the attempts of a few armed men to frustrate the will of the majority of the people in Somalia. The Somali people have suffered a lot for a long time. It is time the international community lived up to its responsibilities in the maintenance of peace and security.

While we commend the efforts of all those who continue to search for successful solutions and those who are providing humanitarian assistance, given all the risks involved in this endeavour, we also reiterate the appeal of the Organization of African Unity to those concerned to desist from supplying war materials, which further exacerbate the situation, to any of the factions in Somalia.

The Somali people are looking to all of us for further assistance. It is important that we do not abandon them. Through you, Mr. President, we appeal to the international community to assist them in any way possible. It is our hope that the international community will be generous in rendering the badly needed humanitarian assistance and that the Security Council, working with all those involved, particularly the Organization of African Unity and interested regional intergovernmental organizations, will redouble its efforts to demonstrate its resolve and determination to find a lasting solution.

The President: I thank the representative of Swaziland for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We are convinced, Mr. President, that given your broad knowledge of the issues, great experience and diplomatic skills, you will certainly accomplish your tasks in the service of international peace and security in a manner that does honour to your country, the sister nation of Botswana, linked to Algeria by deep friendship, and to all Africa.

I also wish to express our esteem and appreciation to the Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador Albright, for her efforts and achievements as President of the Security Council in the month of February.

The Security Council's discussion of the situation in Somalia is a timely event. I wish to express our gratitude and thanks to you personally, Sir, and to the Ambassadors of Egypt and Guinea-Bissau for this most welcome and significant initiative. We would like it to be seen as an expression of solidarity with the brotherly people of Somalia, who have suffered and continue to suffer so much from the war and its miseries. They are the victims of short-sighted political machinations and irresponsible ambitions. We hope that this discussion will convey a firm and clear political message to all parties directly concerned with Somalia as a result of their position and responsibility, be they individuals or organizations — the message that the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference will henceforth dedicate their efforts to helping the people of Somalia establish the conditions necessary for national reconciliation and the formation of a broad-based Government.

At the end of this month, it will be one year since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). Since then, the United Nations presence has gradually declined, to the point where the Organization was compelled to transfer its office from Somalia. We appreciate the substantive difficulties and

problems that have been encountered by the United Nations in Somalia, as presented by the Secretary-General in his most recent report to the Security Council on the situation in that country. We also recognize that inadmissible acts of aggression and sabotage have been directed against United Nations personnel and property.

However, in our view, such difficulties and acts should not be used as a pretext for abandoning that country. Given its responsibilities towards Somalia, a State Member of the United Nations, and its people, the Security Council enjoys the political and moral authority and the power to influence events there. It is true that the problems of Somalia are the responsibility of the Somali people themselves, but the international community should not use the lack of cooperation by some parties in Somalia as an excuse to shirk its duties in the face of such a tragedy. The United Nations, we feel, has not exhausted all the ideas or energy that could encourage the Somali factions and party leaders to honour their commitments under the Nairobi Declaration of 24 March 1994, which provides a basis for the settlement of the Somali crisis, to fostering national reconciliation and establishing a central Government with authority over the Somali State and people in the spheres of security, economy and the country's territorial integrity.

The humanitarian assistance efforts made in very precarious security conditions by the United Nations and other international and non-governmental organizations to relieve the suffering of the Somali people deserve our full appreciation and tribute. However, the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance continues to depend on a political settlement of the crisis. Humanitarian efforts to address the political problem cannot replace political action *vis-à-vis* the Somali factions. The situation requires consistent political action by the United Nations, in addition to the pursuit of humanitarian assistance, in a way that responds to the ever-growing needs, including the need for medicine, in the light of the deteriorating health situation in Somalia.

It is high time the Security Council rose above the political repercussions of its failure in Somalia and resumed the initiative in order to create or take opportunities to make progress towards genuine peace.

The Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have already suggested ideas worthy of support. The United Nations political and moral support for these efforts could ensure their success. The proposal to create a contact group for Somalia deserves support and encouragement from the international community. A combination of efforts by all parties and intensified action with regard to the factions in conflict have become urgently necessary for the promotion of national reconciliation. All the parties, whether States or individuals, capable of exerting influence on the leaders of the rival factions should use their full influence to convince them to give up short-sighted calculations and fulfil their responsibilities to the State and people of Somalia.

We hope, in the light of the crisis in Somalia, that today's debate will have concrete results, even if they are modest, and that the debate will not remain a dead letter.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ethiopia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia): Allow me first to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. Your proven wisdom and rich diplomatic experience are great assets which the Council is privileged to enjoy under your leadership.

It is also my privilege and duty, as the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to pay a special tribute to you for your well-known contributions to the alleviation of the social, economic and political problems affecting our continent. The initiative you took to bring the situation of Somalia to the Council's attention, making the present debate on Somalia possible, will undoubtedly have a significant impact on efforts to mitigate the suffering of the Somali people and to resolve the crisis in that troubled land.

I also pay a special tribute, Mr.President, to your predecessor, Ambassador Albright of the United States, for her excellent leadership last month.

The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) was withdrawn from Somalia one year ago. At that time, the Security Council issued a presidential statement expressing its conviction that only a genuinely representative and broad-based approach to reconciliation would bring about a lasting political settlement and allow for the re-emergence of civil society in Somalia. The Council also supported the view of the Secretary-General that Somalia should not be abandoned

by the United Nations, which is continuing to help the Somali people achieve a political settlement to the conflict in their country and at the same time provide humanitarian and other support.

We thank the Secretary-General for his continued interest in the people of Somalia and for his efforts to make a difference. Today, five years after the crisis in Somalia began, and one year after the withdrawal of UNOSOM II, the situation in Somalia still remains a matter of grave concern. The country is without a central government, and hostility among the various factions continues. The humanitarian situation has also become an additional source of frustration and anxiety as a result of the uncompromising attitude of Somali faction leaders and increasing insecurity in the country.

This rather unfortunate state of affairs has undoubtedly hindered progress towards achieving lasting peace and national reconciliation — and the formation of a broad-based government at the national and regional levels. The prevalence of peace and stability in Somalia depends solely on the willingness and determination of all the warring factions and their leaders to pursue an all-encompassing national reconciliation process leading to the establishment of a broad-based government.

In spite of the widely felt and urgent need for a broad-based government, Somalia is far from achieving that goal. The obstacles are clear. They are essentially those people whose role is crucial for peace in the country, who claim that there is already a broad-based government in Somalia and that the national reconciliation process has been completed. To say the least, this attitude does not help the process of moving towards peace and stability in Somalia.

It has been and continues to be our view that the Somali people and the various factions should assume the primary responsibility for resolving the crisis in their country through peaceful means. It is our hope that the Somali faction leaders will assume this task in a responsible manner so as to ensure the re-emergence of civil society in Somalia. Notwithstanding the primary responsibility of the Somali people and their leaders in deciding the fate and the future of their country, the international community should closely monitor the situation in Somalia and contribute its share in assisting and encouraging all-inclusive national reconciliation that would eventually lead to the formation of a broad-based national government.

We note that many Somali leaders have requested the United Nations to support their peace initiatives financially and logistically. It was pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, submitted to the Security Council on 19 January 1996, that the United Nations has no resources for such support. While we understand the frustration and disappointment of the international community over the lack of progress in the process of national reconciliation, we also wish to stress that every opportunity must be seized to encourage and promote dialogue and to maintain contact with all Somali factions to this end.

At the regional level, in spite of the many challenges and difficulties, the Organization of African Unity has continued to closely monitor developments in Somalia. In May 1995 the OAU dispatched a Tripartite Mission to assess the situation and to encourage dialogue and direct contact with the various factions in that country.

The current Chairman of the OAU, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, His Excellency Mr. Meles Zenawi — who also has a special OAU mandate on Somalia — and the Secretary-General of the OAU have continued their efforts aimed at finding a lasting solution to the crisis in Somalia. The sixty-third session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in Addis Ababa from 26 to 28 February 1996, also considered the report of the OAU Secretary-General on Somalia and adopted a resolution, in which it, *inter alia*, expressed concern over the situation in Somalia and over the stalemate in the process of national reconciliation and the establishment of a broad-based national authority. It called upon the Somali leaders to recognize the need to act urgently to promote dialogue aimed at the establishment of a broad-based national government and at the pursuit of national reconciliation. Furthermore, the OAU Council of Ministers appealed to OAU member States and the international community as a whole to provide humanitarian assistance in view of the worsening humanitarian situation in Somalia.

As noted repeatedly, there is no doubt that the solution of the persistent crisis in Somalia lies in the hands of Somalia's own people and leaders. However, much to our disappointment, no progress has been made thus far in ending the crisis in that country; the latest reports even suggest the possibility of a further deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation. One of the things we should recognize is the fact that the bulk of the people of Somalia share the frustration of the international community. The tormented and victimized

Somalis want peace and stability more than anything else. It is only those who benefit from the miseries of the people of Somalia that reap the fruit of the violence and the constant instability. This is why Somalia should not be abandoned.

In these circumstances it has become ever more evident that the international community should closely monitor the situation in Somalia. For understandable reasons, the international community cannot be as passionate as it was two or three years ago. It seems that we are getting used to the agony of the people. Unfortunately, this only worsens the plight of the Somalis. We should never get used to the suffering of children, women and the elderly or to the degradation of any human being anywhere or at any time. The Somali people need and deserve peace with justice. It goes without saying that we should not run out of passion and compassion. In spite of our disappointments, we should not conclude that the conflict in Somalia is the sole business of the Somali people. Every effort should be made to help them achieve national reconciliation and lasting peace.

In this context, we wish to emphasize the important role that the United Nations and the OAU and other regional organizations can play in the search for a solution to the conflict in Somalia. It also goes without saying that the efforts of these organizations should be coordinated.

Serious attention should also be given to the humanitarian situation in Somalia, to mitigate the suffering of the people and prevent another major humanitarian crisis like those we have witnessed in the past. In this respect, we note with appreciation the efforts made thus far by United Nations agencies and their international and Somali partners to deliver substantial emergency and rehabilitation assistance, and we urge them to continue and expand their humanitarian activities in Somalia.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that humanitarian intervention should continue to alleviate the plight of the Somalis. But a lasting solution will be found only if we are able to address the root causes of the conflict in a holistic way which will enable us to break the vicious circle.

The President: I thank the representative of Ethiopia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shah (India): Mr. President, let me join previous speakers in conveying our happiness at seeing you in the Chair this month.

It is now a year since the United Nations withdrew its peace-keeping operation from Somalia. That particular operation marked a watershed in the post-cold-war history of United Nations activities. Along with another major peace-keeping operation, the peace-keeping operation in Somalia has had a lasting impact on the international community and has clearly exposed the limits of multilateral activism while emphasizing that dealing with human relations is a complex task that requires patience and perseverance and is not susceptible to mechanical solutions.

There was a time when the international media could not get enough on the events in Somalia. Now, if media coverage is any guide, it seems that the problem had never arisen. Prophets of doom had warned that when the United Nations withdrew from Somalia this so-called failed State would collapse and an unthinkable disaster might follow. The Secretary-General in his January 1996 report to the Council noted that while there had been no major progress towards national reconciliation, an all-out civil war had been averted; new political trends were visible, including the emergence of regional administrations.

The Secretary-General has expressed the hope that further progress in establishing regional authorities would have a beneficial effect on efforts to establish a central authority in the near future. We sincerely hope that this will happen sooner than later and that a durable peace will return to Somalia to enable its people to rebuild their battered lives and once again set out on the path of social and economic development. In this context, we appreciate the efforts being made by the United Nations political office. We support the continued extension of humanitarian and relief assistance to the people of Somalia. We pay a tribute to all those who, in spite of the hardship and danger, have persevered in this noble task.

The United Nations operation in Somalia has provided important lessons for future peace-keeping operations which the international community would do well to recognize. It has led the Secretary-General to underscore in his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" the reality that

> "International problems cannot be solved quickly or within a limited time. Conflicts the United Nations is asked to resolve usually have deep roots and ... [their] resolution requires patient diplomacy ... over a period of time ... It is necessary to resist the temptation to use military power to speed them up. Peace-keeping and the use of force ... should be seen as alternative techniques and not as adjacent points on a continuum, permitting easy transition from one to the other". (*S/1995/1, para. 36*)

India has for decades contributed consistently and regularly to United Nations peace-keeping operations in Africa. I am proud to recall that Indian peace-keeping troops distinguished themselves in the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Somalia. Our troops took the opportunity of this difficult mission to interact on a daily basis with the ordinary people of Somalia. As has been the practice of Indian peace-keeping forces in several operations in different parts of the world, Indian armed forces took the opportunity of this difficult operation to interact with local people and participate in community affairs and developmental activities, and were thus able to contribute in some measure to restoring peace, tranquillity and normalcy in the areas in which they were deployed.

The lives we lost in Somalia were not in vain. It was demonstrated that the people of Somalia desire peace and are committed to it. And we must signal to the people that we are fully behind them in this endeavour, that we have not forgotten them simply because some of the objectives of the United Nations operation were not fulfilled.

We are happy to note that the Secretary-General believes that even in a worst-case scenario the United Nations agencies can, through their continued operation, play an important role in preventing a major humanitarian crisis from taking place in Somalia. The international community must commit itself to providing the minimum level of supplies that are necessary. For their part, the Somali faction leaders must ensure the safety and security of all personnel of humanitarian and United Nations agencies. We also concur with the Security Council in its request to all Somali parties and faction leaders to reopen the Mogadishu main seaport and other transportation facilities to enable emergency humanitarian supplies to reach those most in need.

The message that we would like this meeting of the Council to convey to the people and political leaders of Somalia is that the international community has not abandoned them. The international community continues to look for ways and means to assist them in their ongoing endeavours towards a national political reconciliation and economic rehabilitation. However, they have a responsibility to create appropriate conditions to enable the international community to effectively assist them in this process.

The President: I thank the representative of India for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): I should like first to thank you, Mr. President, for having given me the opportunity to address the Council on the question now before it: the situation in Somalia.

Allow me, Sir, sincerely to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council, whose business, I am convinced, you will conduct with your customary skill and wisdom. I should like also to pay tribute to Ambassador Albright for the very distinguished way in which she conducted the work of the Council last month.

The Chairman of the African Group, the Ambassador of Tunisia, has made a statement on behalf of our Group, and the Chairman of the Arab Group, the Ambassador of Jordan, will be stating the position of that Group. I associate myself with those statements.

A year ago, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) withdrew from Somalia without having attained the goal for which it was created — resolution of the conflict, national reconciliation and the restoration of peace and security in that fraternal African country.

Since that time, the various Somali factions, left to their own devices, do not appear to have made any meaningful progress in the quest for a peaceful, lasting solution to their conflict, despite the many attempts and initiatives taken to that end. It is true, however, that thus far a spread of the conflict and an increase in the fighting have, relatively speaking, been avoided.

The regional administrations established thanks to the efforts of the leaders of the various factions and many of those created with the aid of UNOSOM are certainly

in operation. So-called "Koranic" tribunals are fighting illegal schemes in many of these regions. All these efforts and achievements have helped to bring about relative peace in several areas of Somalia, which has allowed the United Nations programmes to continue their activities almost normally, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his latest report to the Security Council.

Other regions, however, such as that running from the south of Mogadishu to the end of the Djouba Valley, including the Bay and the Bakool regions, are less secure, and the humanitarian situation seems to be rather precarious there. In his latest report on the situation in Somalia, the Secretary-General raised an alarm as to the conflict's consequences on the humanitarian situation in these regions, and the efforts of the international community should take into account the urgent needs of that part of the country.

The situation does not seem to have improved since UNOSOM II came to an end. We think that its chances of improvement will continue to diminish daily so long as the international community does not show the necessary resolve to put an end to this terrible conflict.

The conflict that has so battered this fraternal country unfortunately shows no signs of an imminent national reconciliation that would guarantee a restoration of peace and stability. Each time a faction takes an initiative, another faction quickly undermines it and destroys it. Neither the domestic efforts made by the faction leaders nor the regional efforts, such as those of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), have managed to make any progress towards finding a solution that could be agreed to by all Somalis. Unfortunately, this is the situation reflected in the report of the Secretary-General of 19 January 1996.

It is true that the Somalis have the primary responsibility for finding a solution to their conflict, but, in our view, the international community should lend them greater assistance in their efforts, and not abandon them.

To that end, the Security Council, the principal organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, must reflect further on this matter in order to devise ways to put an end to this seemingly endless conflict, whose consequences could jeopardize peace and security throughout the region.

A meeting was held today to launch the special system-wide United Nations initiative for Africa. The moving appeal made by the Secretary-General should prompt us to take action. He said, basically, "We cannot abandon Africa." We would add: "Let us begin by not abandoning Somalia."

We hope that the Security Council will take a similar initiative with regard to settling the many conflicts that still ravage Africa. We cannot imagine economic development and social advancement where insecurity and political instability continue to prevail. We are convinced that the United Nations should continue its tireless efforts, not only in the humanitarian area but also to help to promote dialogue and national reconciliation.

In this respect, we support the initiatives of the Secretary-General to continue his efforts, and we encourage the various bodies of the United Nations to continue their work in order to avert another humanitarian crisis. We hope that the international community will respond generously to their appeals so that they can accomplish their work. This must, of course, go hand in hand with the efforts for peace and national reconciliation.

The President: I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the high office of President of the Security Council for the current month. I am sure that under your able guidance the Council will successfully fulfil its responsibilities.

The situation in Somalia, as analysed by the special political adviser to the Secretary-General and presented in his briefing to the Security Council, does not present a rosy picture at all. After the withdrawal of United Nations peace-keeping forces, the prospects for reconciliation between General Aidid's, Mr. Ali Mahdi's and the other warring factions had improved. It was hoped that, after the withdrawal of United Nations forces, the various political factions would work towards national reconciliation in order to restore peace, provide security for the people of Somalia in general and foreigners in particular, and bring about socio-economic development. However, the situation prevailing today, which is still characterized by slow economic activity, by

disease and by widespread malnutrition affecting women and children, reminds us of Somalia's tragic history.

The shooting of a representative of an Italian non-governmental organization indicated once again that foreign nationals working in Somalia were not safe. This sense of insecurity has not only hampered the scope of international humanitarian assistance, but has also created numerous logistical difficulties for the personnel of the non-governmental organizations. The international humanitarian organizations are also facing serious problems with the local administrations. The building of military bases by various warlords can bring only misery to the people of Somalia, especially after the assassination of a noted peace activist, Mr. Elman Ali Mohammad, and particularly if the ongoing negotiations for reconciliation fail.

It is almost a year now since the last peace-keepers left Somalia. Against the backdrop of all information received from various agencies, the Security Council needs to review the situation in Somalia. We need to furnish answers to the following questions: have the goals set forth before the withdrawal of United Nations peace-keeping forces been achieved? Have the people been allowed to determine their own destiny without fear? Are people of Somalia leading their lives according to their own free will? Have the devastated buildings, hospitals and schools been rebuilt? Has the widespread devastation been replaced by the greater level of economic activity that prevailed before 1992? And, has a government of national reconciliation been formed? If the answer to these questions is in the negative, then the Security Council should not abandon Somalia at such a critical juncture in its history: the United Nations agenda of ensuring a decent and harmonious life for the people of Somalia still remains unfinished.

Pakistan paid an unacceptably high price in Somalia with the death of 32 of its peace-keepers, but we stood firm in our solidarity with the international community in order to achieve the greater objective of preserving peace and security in that country. We will continue to support our Somali brethren in their effort to initiate a process of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Pakistan urges the Security Council to demonstrate its credibility by taking effective and a positive steps to boost its role of mediation and arbitration in Somalia, and in all other places where disputes are taking a heavy toll of human life and property, honour and dignity. The most important of all these elements is the resolve of peoples to determine their future according to their own free will.

The maintenance of peace and security is the permanent responsibility of the United Nations. If peace breaks down in one part of the world, the breakdown cannot be cauterized by ignoring it. Local or national conflicts have the potential of threatening regional and international peace and security. The United Nations therefore cannot afford to put serious problems on the back burner or on an autopilot: this kind of passive crisis management can be not only a betrayal of the United Nations own mandate, but will also lead to bloodier and costlier conflicts and strife. The United Nations should not suspend its own mechanisms of good offices, arbitration or mediation once the spotlight on a crisis is switched off. The Security Council and the elaborate apparatus of the United Nations should therefore keep a sustained and sustainable interest and involvement in lingering and festering disputes.

The implosion in Somalia had hurt the Somali economy and polity very deeply. The scars left by the civil war must, of course, be healed by the Somalis themselves, but with the assistance of the international community. We should not write off States with serious internal problems as failed States; they need our constant support until they become fully functional and operational.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me, Mr. President, to begin my statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States — over which I have the honour of presiding this month — by extending to you our sincere congratulations on your assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would emphasize that your wide experience and political expertise will be major factors in directing the Council's work and deliberations towards the success we fully expect.

Allow me also to express our gratitude and commendations to your predecessor, Her Excellency Ambassador Madeleine Albright, the Permanent

Representative of the United States of America, for her successful presidency of the Council last month.

Mr. President, the Arab States received notification of your decision to convene an open meeting of the Council to explore possible ways of addressing the tragic situation in Somalia with satisfaction and great appreciation, and gave it their support; the Arab Group would also like to express its appreciation for the vigorous efforts of the Council in respect of the problem of Somalia, and of the many resolutions it has adopted on that issue.

As we are all aware, the tragedy of Somalia, in both its political and humanitarian aspects, is still racking that Member State: there can be no doubt that the efforts of the United Nations, as represented by the Council; of the Secretary-General; and especially of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) — established by the Council under resolution 794 (1992) — have created the right environment to facilitate and ensure the success of humanitarian assistance in Somalia.

That humanitarian assistance, although basically humanitarian in nature, did to a certain degree help avert a degradation in the social and security situations in Somalia, and we assume that the United Nations, through the Council, will finish the job by seeking means to achieve a political settlement that will restore peace and security to Somalia and its people, whose lot has been one of continued suffering and tragedy after tragedy.

We believe that the fundamental and ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation, a political settlement and peace and security in their country lies primarily with the Somali people, its leaders, its factions and its representatives. However — and despite the termination of UNOSOM II — that this is so does not prevent the Council from resuming its endeavours to find a way out of the impasse — within the framework of the Charter, within the limits of the instruments available to it and in light of the nature of the present phase of the situation — to help the Somali people extricate themselves from their extremely complex ordeal.

No doubt the follow-up and activation of numerous provisions of the Council's resolutions could help in the honourable endeavour of finding common ground for national reconciliation and for the mobilization of regional and international support to form a solid basis for a lasting, comprehensive political settlement to the situation in Somalia. Undoubtedly, the coordination of United Nations efforts with those of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Arab League and other regional and international organizations will be of great help in the efforts to achieve this vital objective.

In addressing you, Mr. President, and placing the question of the Somali people and of Somalia before this Council, as the main organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, we hope that the Council will spare no effort in exploring the means and the possible contacts with all the parties concerned, within and outside Somalia, in order to halt the deterioration of the situation and help in achieving a political settlement ensuring the unity of Somalia and peace and stability for its people.

We affirm the need to preserve a favourable environment for the continuation of humanitarian activities and not to permit the exploitation of any vacuum resulting from the withdrawal of the international forces. We also affirm the importance of continued strict application of the embargo on the provision of weapons to Somalia under Security Council resolution 733 (1992). I must also second the proposals put forward in the discussion by some delegations calling on the Council to dispatch a fact-finding mission to Somalia in order to come up with definite proposals and recommendations to deal with the situation.

In concluding my statement, I would like to reaffirm that we appreciate the great efforts and the honourable role of the Secretary-General. It would also be fitting to request him to dispatch a special representative to explore the views and inclinations of various parties. This would be an effective means of finding options that might serve as a point of departure for the Council in the future in its important political efforts to deal with the question of Somalia.

The President: I thank the representative of Jordan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of March. May I also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Madeleine Albright of the United States, for the great interest she showed in African issues during her presidency of the Council.

Your personal commitment, Mr. President, and that of the brotherly people of your neighbouring country, Botswana, to the cause of Africa's development, peace and stability is well known in our southern African region, particularly to those of us who have had the privilege of walking a mile or two with you. It comes as no surprise to us, therefore, that your unseared conscience dictated that you exhume and give another chance to the pleading SOS of the Somali people, which had been buried by deliberate forgetfulness and connivance.

The delegation of Zimbabwe appreciates the Secretary-General's efforts to keep the Council informed about the sad situation in Somalia. While applauding the Secretary-General's intention to maintain the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, we request that steps be taken to relocate that office to Mogadishu. We are persuaded that a political presence of our global body in Somalia will help re-establish the good offices that could trigger the resumption of an inclusive process of consultation and negotiation aimed at national reconciliation leading to the establishment of a broad-based national government.

Zimbabwe commends the dedication and determination of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and other international humanitarian agencies in their valiant efforts to render assistance to the people of Somalia. We encourage them to maintain their most fruitful endeavours in Somalia so as to prevent the recurrence of the dire humanitarian situation which prevailed in that country prior to the deployment of UNOSOM in 1992. It is regrettable that the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Somalia will remain treacherously risky, and the benefits thereof will continue to evade certain needy communities in that country for as long as the conflict there remains unresolved. The people of Somalia and those who continue to risk their lives while delivering emergency aid to that war-torn country must not be let down.

We therefore encourage the Secretary-General to continue carrying out quiet diplomacy in Somalia in consultation with the Organization of African Unity and the neighbouring States to try to determine how the international community can actively assist the people of Somalia. The complexity or straightforwardness of the issue should not determine whether or not the people of Somalia will receive help; neither should judgement be passed so easily on their worthiness or unworthiness of help. Whatever the assessment of the pros and cons of the matter might be, the people of Somalia are as much in need of help as the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If the United Nations is to maintain its image and credibility, it should steer clear of all appearances of double standards. The impression should never be created that those Member States which have a secure hold on political power and other resources will direct our global Organization to be involved seriously only in those conflicts to which they themselves are inextricably linked either by kinship to those who are victims or by physical or geographical proximity to them.

As we call upon the United Nations to assist in promoting dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia, we acknowledge the fact that our Organization cannot impose peace on that country or, indeed, on any other. We realize that the Somali people are ultimately responsible for ensuring that peace returns to their country. We therefore reiterate our call on the Somali people, particularly their political leaders and parties, to pursue and establish sustained and sustainable dialogue towards a lasting political solution.

I cannot conclude my statement without appealing to the brotherhood of humankind and the global-village spirit which His Excellency President Robert Mugabe of the Republic of Zimbabwe invoked in his statement on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The people of Somalia must realize that the conflict in their country holds them and the rest of us in poverty and insecurity. They are harming not only themselves, but all of their neighbours in this global village. They have a responsibility to themselves and to the rest of the world. The international community, for its part, must realize that the conflict in Somalia poses a threat to peace and security. It causes death and destruction and breeds refugees for whom we have to care. It affects the world economy and destroys our environment. The United Nations must do what only it is mandated to do by this, our global village: to maintain peace and security in the world.

When history judges this generation, Somalia, Rwanda and others like them may speak louder than all other witnesses.

The President: I thank the representative of Zimbabwe for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Uganda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mukasa-Ssali (Uganda): At the very outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to express our appreciation to your predecessor.

The statement of the President of the Security Council of 24 January 1996 reflects the major concerns and views of my delegation, given the tragic fact that, despite the sustained efforts of the international community to search for a way forward to an overall situations of peace and security in Somalia, that goal still eludes us.

Uganda supports the territorial integrity of Somalia and has participated in several attempts to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict, although internal, through the medium of negotiations. It is regrettable, therefore, that the situation in Somalia since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) is still so unpredictable that it is characterized by conflict, instability and lawlessness.

The Uganda Government does not recognize any faction purporting to be a Government in Somalia, and we in Uganda are supportive of all efforts, both international and regional, to promote national reconciliation in Somalia, including those under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity, through the statement of 19 December 1995 of the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

My delegation continues to be appalled by the rampant gangsterism prevailing in Somalia in the form of kidnappings and wanton killings of personnel of international humanitarian agencies. We are equally concerned about the consequences of the closure of the Mogadishu air and sea ports, especially the effect that this has had on the flow of humanitarian assistance and emergency aid, particularly immunization and other measures to control the spread of epidemic diseases.

Uganda is also concerned about the activities of some foreign private entities that are abetting the alleged flow of arms to Somalia. In this matter, my delegation is supportive of the continued total arms embargo on Somali territory in accordance with Security Council resolution 733 (1992).

We would like to add our voice to those of previous speakers who have commended the work of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia in Nairobi and urge its strengthening and eventual deployment in Mogadishu when conditions permit. The Somali leaders, meanwhile, must give up a little of their pride and rise to the occasion, allowing the international community to reach out to them and help them out of this intractable problem.

Finally, my delegation looks forward to the day when a united and peaceful Somali State will resume its rightful place among the ranks of nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Uganda for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sy (Organization of African Unity (OAU)) (*interpretation from French*): At the outset allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for your kindness and, through you, to thank all the members of the Council who were kind enough to support the participation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) delegation. My thanks also go to all those who have sought to rescue this question from oblivion.

Indeed, the civil war that has torn at Somalia for several years has yet to find a peaceful settlement, and the country remains without a central government. In this light, the events of the past six months have not been encouraging. Fighting has been observed in the north-west, at the Hargeisa airport; in August, between various Issa clans; in the areas of Zeila and Lughaye in July and August, leading to the closing of the border with Djibouti; and finally, in the towns of Abdel Kadir and Jidhi, near the Ethiopian border, which troops loyal to Mr. Egal have retaken from the Issa militias. In the south, partisans of General Aidid have been fighting the militiamen of the Rahanwein Resistance Army in and around Baidoa and those of Ali Mahdi and Osman Atto in Mogadishu.

It is well known that in recent years approximately 600,000 Somalis have fled to neighbouring countries, while within Somalia itself there are half a million displaced persons. As a result of the fighting in the north-west and an increase in the cost of living, population movements have been noted towards both Djibouti and Ethiopia. It should also be pointed out that more than 400 people, primarily from southern Somalia, reached Bossaso, in the north, after having been expelled from

Yemen on 29 August last. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have provided assistance to that group, which includes a relatively large number of unaccompanied children.

In this context, we can only welcome the continuation of operations to repatriate Somali refugees who had gone to Kenya. Of these, 3,588 who had been living in the Marafa camp returned to the Lower Juba area, and 2,934 others have left the Dadaab camp for the Middle Juba region. We note that over the past 18 months UNHCR has helped repatriate nearly 100,000 Somali refugees and hopes to transport another 20,000 by air, land and sea by the end of 1996.

But, of course, that is only part of the problem. During its 63rd session, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) took up that question. First, it expressed gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ato Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and current Chairman of the OAU, who also has a special mandate. It expressed concern about the situation in Somalia and the impasse in the negotiations aimed at restarting the process of national reconciliation and setting up a broad-based national authority. The Council of Ministers therefore appealed to the Somali factions to refrain from any activity that might plunge the country into widespread war.

Above all, the Council of Ministers urged the Somali leaders to take urgent action to promote dialogue with a view to establishing a broad-based national authority for achieving national reconciliation. The Council also decided that the Tripartite Mission should make another visit to Somalia in order to maintain direct contacts with the various Somali factions and assess the situation on the ground.

The humanitarian situation remains a source of anxiety. Serious reductions in food have been reported, especially in the Basi region, which has been affected by severe drought. The OAU wishes to take this opportunity to appeal to Member States and to the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to deal with the worsening humanitarian situation. The situation is serious - more serious than we would like to admit.

We therefore appeal to the international community to consider how to come to Somalia's aid. The country deserves such aid, and now is the time to support the proposals of Tunisia and Ethiopia and to reaffirm our support for establishing permanent United Nations representation in Somalia, which we believe is imperative. I am sure that my appeal will be heard.

The President: I thank the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity for his kind words addressed to me. The next speaker is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bakuramutsa (Rwanda) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation agrees with the statement made by the Chairman of the African Group, of which Rwanda is a member.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Somalia. Although the report seems routine, at least it reminds us that Somalia exists and that its problems are still with us.

We congratulate the Somali people, and the various Somali leaders, on the efforts they have made to try to find common ground for the establishment of a national government. We also pay tribute to the diplomatic efforts made by leaders in Africa.

We also congratulate the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which took the initiative in convening a meeting of the various leaders in September 1995 to encourage implementation of the Nairobi agreements.

I congratulate the OAU on its efforts and initiatives to facilitate agreement between the Somali factions. We also congratulate the League of Arab States. We convey our encouragement to the humanitarian organizations of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and others for the sacrifices they have made for the Somali people.

Just a few hours before this discussion on Somalia began we were making solemn declarations, with satellite coverage, about development programmes in Africa. That made us forget for a moment the reality of Africa and its problems. We cannot delude ourselves about those problems, because they are the daily lot of thousands of people.

We must not forget that Somalia is not an isolated case in Africa; there are also Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and others. The misfortune gnawing away at those countries is not very different; it has become a common denominator for most African countries. That is

why my delegation hopes that this public debate on Somalia will not give its participants a sense of self-satisfaction. We hope that it will lead to thought in the Security Council and the Secretariat of this Organization, and among Somalis and all Africans who are victims of situations which are often beyond their control.

My delegation would also like to denounce the minimalist practice, increasingly adopted by this Organization, of abandoning member countries in difficulty. We have seen it take place in Somalia, Rwanda and, to some extent, Liberia. It is well-known that the withdrawal of the United Nations force from Somalia helped to increase chaos there. Genocide in Rwanda was made possible by the withdrawal of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda. Yet the same Organization is prepared to intervene elsewhere, in countries where the problems are similar but less severe.

Experience has shown that countries which have been abandoned ultimately experience disasters from which they have difficulty recovering. In the long term, failing to take a political stance, or taking inadequate positions, together with the weakness of the preventive diplomacy of which this Organization is such a strong advocate, means that the Organization and the international community pay a heavy price, dealing with the damage caused by bad policy. The Organization will bear responsibility before history in particular for its handling of the situation in African countries, which, despite official statements, have been neglected.

As for Somalia, it is for the Somalis to find a solution to their problems. The Secretary-General's report records the efforts made to form a Government. However, the parties have said that, in order for them to come together, they need a facilitator, the necessary resources and a forum. The Somali leaders are ready for dialogue and have expressed a wish for it. The same leaders have also appealed to the United Nations to continue to play the role of facilitator and mediator.

What is the point of having several United Nations offices for Somalia in Kenya? Their effectiveness is difficult to gauge. All the United Nations offices, such as those of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, have preferred to base themselves in Nairobi. My delegation is convinced that the establishment of the so-called Political Office for Somalia in Nairobi is useful neither for the Somalis nor for United Nations agencies operating in Somalia. The latest report of the Secretary-General on Somalia mentions no important initiative taken by that office throughout 1995.

Depriving Somalia of the presence of the international community and the United Nations in Mogadishu has given a green light to the various factions. The Somalis and their leaders need time to rise above conflict, heal their wounds and find common ground. We recognize the importance of security for United Nations personnel, but we also attach great importance to the participation of the interested parties — in this case the Somali people themselves — in decisions about their future. However, the Somali leaders have requested reinstatement of the United Nations Political Office for Somali in Mogadishu. My delegation sincerely hopes that this legitimate appeal will be heeded and answered. Great attention must be paid to the situation of Somalia, which is a Member State of this Organization. This is all the more important because of the problems which Somalia faces.

In conclusion, my delegation appeals to the Security Council and the Secretariat to provide an opportunity for the Somali people themselves to find a solution to their problem. The Council should resume contact with the various Somali leaders and listen to them impartially. The Council should help them to create a forum to facilitate dialogue between those leaders, which they say they want. Humanitarian aid should be continued, but it should be borne in mind that the most pressing need is to find a political solution.

The President: There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.